

Chestnut Hill

Baptist Church

1834 - 1897

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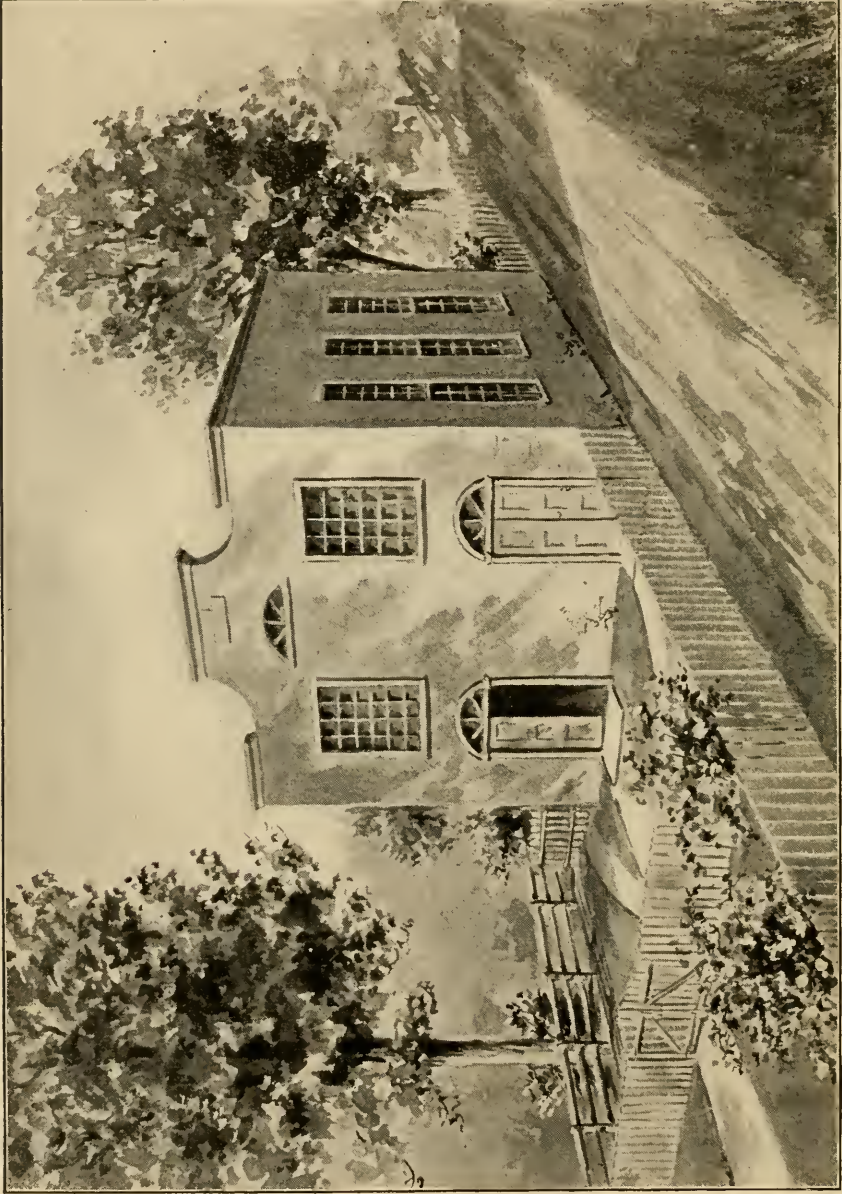
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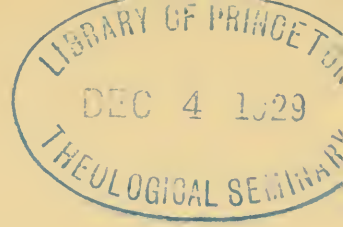
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FIRST HOUSE OF WORSHIP (1835)

From a drawing by I. Gilbert Young.



... THE ...

Chestnut Hill 

Baptist Church

Glimpses of Sixty-three Years

BY THE PASTOR
ROBERT MELVILLE HUNSICKER

MDCCCXCVIII

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“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together, and herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored and ye are entered into their labors.”—John iv: 36-38.

“Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.”—Exodus xiv: 15.

Prefatory Note

“No generation appreciates its own place in history.” These words of Dr. Josiah Strong certainly find a striking illustration in the case of those of whose history a few glimpses are given in the pages that follow. Because we, their successors, appreciate the work of the generation or more that has passed away, as they did not, themselves, this attempt has been made to put their history into permanent form. This has been done for the inspiration of those who “have entered into their labors.” A fuller explanation of the undertaking of the work will be found in the closing pages. To this the inquiring reader is referred.

When this project was inaugurated, nothing more pretentious was proposed than the issue of a plain pamphlet. But, with the progress of the work, the accumulation of material of so much general interest seemed to merit and demand that it be preserved in more permanent form. Accordingly, the decision was reached to issue this book, with the illustrations contained. It has been a gradual development.

This has been a “work of love.” None the less, however, has the writer sought to do his work with thoroughness and accuracy. If inaccuracies should be discovered, a charitable judgment upon them is asked. Let it be remembered that sources of information have at best been but

PREFATORY NOTE

meagre ; nor have records, for which equal authority might be claimed, always been found to be in agreement. In such cases time and labor have not been spared to determine which held the stronger claim for strict accuracy.

It has not been the purpose to present an exhaustive history. Rather, it has been to present such a narrative as would preserve for ourselves, and, even more, for those who come after, a record of the general trend of events. This will account for the omission of many things—to say nothing of the impossibility of obtaining them. There will, however, be found an appendix, a mention of certain items which could hardly be incorporated in the body of the work. Some of these are recorded because of their historic interest ; others because of their quaintness and of the hints they give of the times in which they occurred.

If by the reading of this imperfect story of “ three score years and three ” any shall be inspired with a heightened appreciation of the heritage committed to us by those who “ rest from their labors,” and so shall be quickened to a more zealous using of our greater opportunities, the writer will feel that he has been amply rewarded for the labor expended upon its preparation. And now, with the prayer that the blessing of God may attend its perusal, and that our record may be an inspiration to those who shall “ enter into our labors,” this tribute to an honored past is sent forth upon its mission.

Pastor's Study, January, 1898.

Glimpses of Sixty-three Years

Three Score and Three Years Ago

Three score and three years ago! Viewed through this long vista of years, almost incredible to us seem the conditions of every-day life then prevailing. Chestnut Hill was then a country village, in the midst of a community of plain farmers. We find many things quaint, some even romantic. Many of the most commonplace conveniences of our every-day life, and such as seem to us indispensable to ordinary comfort, had no place even in the brain of the wildest dreamer. For example, the resident of the Chestnut Hill of to-day has at his service two steam roads and one electric road. These afford him at least two hundred opportunities in every twenty-four hours for access to the heart of the city. Were he, however, to wake up some morning to find himself in the midst of the conditions of life as they were sixty-three years ago, he would feel that he had been suddenly transported beyond the bounds of civilization. True, there was in operation between Germantown and Philadelphia a steam railroad, with three trains each way daily, the cars "drawn by the first locomotive built in the United States."

But this was only "when the weather was fair," horses being substituted for the engine "when the weather was not fair."* There were to be yet almost twenty years of waiting before Chestnut Hill could boast of having railroad communication with the outer world. The only public conveyance was, of course, the lumbering stage coach. There was one line, passing through the place, carrying passengers between Philadelphia and Bethlehem. The fare charged to the city was "three levies"—thirty-seven and a half cents.

The large taverns of the village were extensively patronized by drovers and teamsters, hucksters and farmers. Large droves of cattle, horses, sheep and, even, turkeys and geese passed through the place on their way to market. A very common sight was the "Pitt teams." These were immense covered wagons, drawn by four or six horses, and carrying freight between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, as well as to other distant points. It must be remembered that the great railroads were still a thing of the future. There were no paved, nor any other sidewalks, gas, or electric lights, telegraphs, or telephones. Almost every family kept a cow or two, and these, after the morning milking, were turned upon the road to hunt their pasture. The tinkling bell, suspended from the neck, gave the clue to their whereabouts, as necessity might require their being

* See Appendix A.

sought at night, in the neighboring woods or along the banks of the shaded Wissahickon. Like Ruth of old, many of the women shared the labors of the men in the harvest field. With sickle in hand, they reaped the ripened grain, or assisted in binding it into sheaves. The length of the day's work was from "sun to sun."

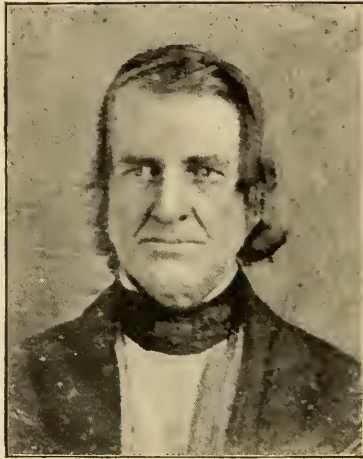
Perhaps nothing more strikingly suggests the vast changes wrought by these years than the fact that about that time, thirty-three acres of land near our church upon the west, and extending from pike to pike, with good buildings, were offered for sale for \$3300. It is difficult to believe that such changes have occurred, but there are some still with us who have lived through them all, bright young people then, but now, "three-score years and ten, or by reason of strength, four-score years."

Going into the churches, we would have found some things very odd. If not still seen, it was not long since men and boys, in warm weather, attended the services in their "shirt sleeves," and young women walked to the church in their bare feet. Those of the "better class," in some cases, carried their shoes till near the church, when they were put on, and in the same way removed and carried home, thus making them last the longer. We would have found no organs in the churches, and hymn-books were a rarity. The minister would "line the hymns;" that is, he would read two lines, when some brother would "raise the tune" and lead in singing them; then two more, and so on through the hymn.

This served a double purpose. It enabled those having no books to sing, as well as those who could not read.

This glimpse of life, as it was lived sixty-three years ago, will set in clearer light the beginnings of that work, the story of which is to be traced in the pages that follow.





Deacon Israel Gilbert

Elected Sept. 6, 1834. Died March 4, 1853

• A Notable Event. •

Thursday, August 15th, 1834, may safely be set down as one of the most notable days in the early and uneventful history of Chestnut Hill. The day was clear and beautiful. In the afternoon, between the hours of three and four o'clock, great crowds gathered upon the banks of the Wissahickon at a point little above the bridge at the foot of what is now called Hartwell Avenue. By one who was present we are told that the people "came from far and near, and the hills were covered with people." They had assembled to witness the baptism of eleven persons, rejoicing in a new-found hope in Christ. To many, as these happy converts were buried, and raised again in the likeness of the burial resurrection, of Christ, it seemed a veritable reproduction of the scenes upon the banks of the Jordan, when the throngs came together to the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist. The woods were made to ring with the glad songs of salvation. The ordinance was administered by Rev. D. A. Nichols, pastor of the Roxborough Baptist Church. The names of those baptized were: Israel Gilbert, Mrs. Jane Gilbert, Jonathan Gilbert, Miss Maria A. Gilbert (now Mrs. Young), Ezra Sands, Sr., George Bicknell, Abner Campbell, Miss Mary A. Crosby, Miss Anna L. Crosby, Miss Maria Sands (now Mrs. Harshaw), and Miss Rachel Bicknell. Only one

incident is recalled that in any way marred the beauty of the occasion. Some "lewd fellows of the baser sort" had anchored a dead dog at the spot selected for the baptism. This having been discovered in time, the candidates were taken to a spot a little farther up the stream, thus defeating the evil designs.

Nine days later, August 24th, five more persons were baptized, viz., Titus Shermer, his wife, Eleanor Shermer, Charles Smith, Eleanor Sands and Sarah Campbell.

On the sixth day of September, these sixteen, together with Mrs. Sarah Besson, received by letter from the Penny-pack Church, were organized into "The Baptist Church of Chestnut Hill."



• Beginnings. •

The old church book says : "The inhabitants of Chestnut Hill, for some considerable time previous to 1834, had been noted for their wickedness." Whether more wicked than the inhabitants of other places we cannot now say. But there was certainly felt by Christian people of various denominations the need of some effort in the direction of evangelization. The record further tells us that "The bread of life had been frequently broken to them by the servants of Christ of different denominations, but to all appearances to little effect." Among these were some Baptist ministers. Finally, the time came when something more definite was to be accomplished. Different influences combined in the inauguration of the movement that resulted in the organization of the church. The exact measure of these several influences cannot, at this distant day, be accurately determined.

On what is now Twenty-seventh Street, at its Junction with Union Avenue, stood a chapel, built for the use of all evangelical denominations, and finally, within the recollection of many still residing on Chestnut Hill, removed to make way for the street. This was erected in the year 1822 largely through the personal influence and offerings of Mr. John Magoffin, a Presbyterian. The ground on which it stood was given for the purpose by Mr. Abraham Heydrick,

a Schwenkfeldter,* great-grandfather of persons of that name at present members of the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church. It was built by John and Joseph Miller. Mrs. Maria Ann Young, widow of the first pastor, writes as follows concerning the beginnings: "There was no other place of worship on the Hill excepting the little union chapel on Graver's Lane (Union Avenue). This all denominations had the right to use by turns. Our family, though none were members at the time, kept the Baptist right. My mother, of the old Levering stock, had the pastor of the Roxborough church preach in the chapel Sunday afternoons frequently. Mr. Young, then Pastor at Milestown, now Oak Lane, exchanged with Mr. Nichols, of Roxborough, on one of the days for the chapel service. He became very much interested, and proposed holding extra meetings and invited Mr. Nichols to help. At the end of ten days there were eleven ready for baptism."

The following is taken from Mr. Young's personal journal. While apparently not strictly harmonizing with what Mrs. Young, with remarkable clearness of memory at eighty-one, has written, yet, if all the circumstances were known, it would doubtless be found to be in strict agreement: "A member of Milestown Church, residing near Chestnut Hill,

*Yielding to the persuasion of Mr. Magoffin, Mr. Heydrick attended the services connected with the dedication. The driver of the family horse, "Yankee," for this occasion, was a grandson, a fifteen-year-old boy. On the first of January, 1898, that grandson, Mr. Caleb Heydrick, died at Whitmarsh, Pa., having lived to the ripe age of 91 years and 3 days. See Appendix B.

was anxious for me to come and preach at Mrs. Besson's, where she lived. I sent an appointment, making it at Besson's; they made it at Union Chapel.* Eight weeks later, at the request of Rev. James Patterson, of Germantown. I preached again. At this time we appointed a protracted meeting four weeks from that time. Rev. D. A. Nichols was informed, and requested to assist." Later the further record is made: "The following day eleven were baptised. This was the beginning of the church in this place." In another record Mr. Young says: "While pastor at Milestown I commenced preaching at Chestnut Hill, Pa., May, 1834."

As to the beginnings, the old church book contains an account so interesting that it deserves to be given in full. This, it will be observed, does not, in all details, agree with the accounts given by Mrs. Young from memory, nor with that taken from Mr. Young's journal. Neither has the writer been able to harmonize them. In all essentials the different accounts agree, and none of them can, with justice to either the past, or the present, be omitted. The record says: "In the month of May, 1834, Brother Robert F. Young was

*These beginnings were not without some touches of romance. There is a tradition preserved concerning Mr. Young's first visit to Chestnut Hill that must not be passed by. It fell to the lot of Miss Maria Ann Gilbert to stay at home on this occasion and prepare the dinner, while the rest of the family attended the services. As they returned home she, in peering through the partly closed shutters of the house still standing, No. 7934 Germantown avenue, to get a sight of the "new preacher," saw—her future husband, whose labors she was to cheer and whose joys and sorrows she was to share for half a century.

solicited to come and preach in this place, which he accordingly did. After this, the above-named brethren [Revs. D. A. Nichols and James Patterson, the Baptist brethren who had preached here] desired him to occupy the days the Baptist denomination were entitled to the Union Chapel of this place. He complied with their wishes. The second time he came was in July following, at which time he appointed a protracted meeting, to commence on the fifth of August, which was to be held in the evenings. He informed Brother D. A. Nichols of the announcement he had made, and requested him to assist. At the time appointed Brethren Young and Nichols came and labored several evenings and on the Sabbath. * * * On the 15th of August an opportunity was given to any who wished to relate the dealings of God with them, at which time eleven came forward and related their experience and requested baptism. Several ministering brethren were present on the occasion, viz., J. Patterson, D. A. Nichols, R. F. Young, W. S. Hall, L. G. Beck and G. Young, besides several lay brethren, who, being satisfied with their experience, agreed to assemble on the Wissahickon in the afternoon of that day and attend to the ordinance of baptism, which, according to appointment, they did, when, in the presence of a large concourse of people, the eleven were baptized.

“At this time the baptized believers requested the opinion of the brethren present on the expediency of establishing a regular Baptist church among them. The ministering and

lay brethren assembled in council capacity and called Rev. James Patterson * to the chair, and Rev. R. F. Young to act as secretary. Whereupon, Resolved to advise the brethren of this place to call a council to convene here on the sixth of September, 1834, at 2 o'clock P. M. The advice given, meeting the approval of the baptized brethren, notice was given to several churches and requested them to appoint a delegation to meet at this place at the time above stated for the purpose of constituting a church.

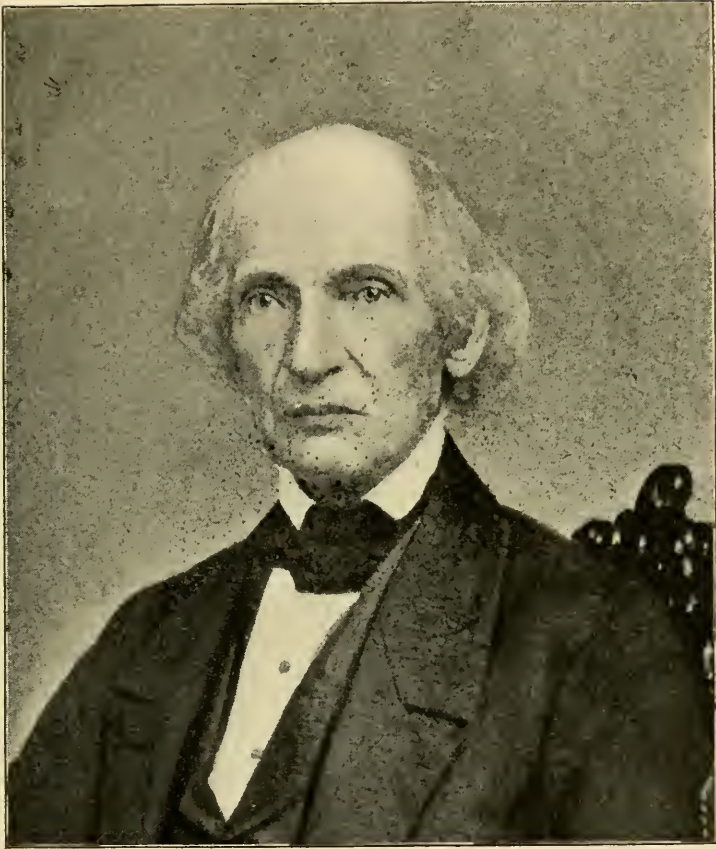
“In about two weeks after the first baptism five more were planted in the likeness of the Saviour's death. Truly our hearts were made to rejoice at the doings of the Lord among us.

“The time arrived that was appointed for the constitution of the church, when a large and respectable council convened at this place, consisting of six ordained ministers and a large delegation from the following churches: Roxborough, Blockley, Frankford, Third Church, Philadelphia; Sansom Street, Philadelphia; New Market Street, Philadelphia; Great Valley, Lower Dublin, Milestown and Norris-

* While the Rev. James Patterson was never pastor of this church yet his active interest was such as to demand for him at least a brief, but honorable mention. He it was who united with Rev. D. A. Nichols in soliciting Mr. Young to preach at Union Chapel on the days assigned for the use of the Baptists. At that time a member of Sansom Street Church, Philadelphia, he united with Chestnut Hill Church, Dec. 20, 1835. There is reason to believe that he exerted a considerable influence. He resided in Germantown. His body reposes in an unmarked grave in the cemetery at the rear of the church.

town. The council organized by calling Rev. Levi Tucker to the chair and D. A. Nichols to act as secretary.

“After due deliberation on the expediency of an immediate constitution of a Baptist church here, and having prepared some articles of faith, proceeded to constitution. The order of exercises was as follows: Prayer, by D. A. Nichols, of Roxborough; sermon, by Rev. L. Tucker, of Blockley, from Ps I, * * * vii., 3 [this is as it is given in the record, but the present writer is unable to understand what is meant] questions proposed to Brother R. F. Young, of Milestown; ordaining prayer, by brother J. Patterson, of Germantown; charge, by Brother W. S. Hall, of Frankford; right hand of fellowship, by Brother R. F. Young, Milestown; address to the spectators, by D. A. Nichols, Roxborough. The church avowed the name to be the Baptist Church of Chestnut Hill. After the exercises were gone through with, the church requested the ministering brethren to set apart Brethren Israel Gilbert and Ezra Sands to the office of deacon, which was done. Brother Tucker made the ordaining prayer, and ministering brethren present imposed the hands of presbytery. Brother Hall gave the right hand of fellowship and Brother Tucker gave the charge. Closed with the 254 hymn of Rippon, “Blest be the tie, etc.” Such was the harmony of the delegation, our hearts were made glad, and such was the joy of the brethren to see a church constituted here that their souls were melted down in the presence of the Lord. I trust we will never forget the day.



DEACON EZRA SANDS

Elected Sept. 6, 1834.

Died May 15, 1869.

“The church was constituted of 17—16 baptized and one by letter. At this time Brother J. Gilbert was chosen clerk.”

And thus it came about that on the sixth* day of September, 1834, the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church was constituted. But, here, two important facts must be remembered. The first is, that, while a mission of neither church, yet, it was through the joint labors of the Milestown and Roxborough pastors, Mr. Young seemingly foremost, that this church was organized. The second is, that, the Milestown Church, giving up their pastor, that the flock just gathered might be shepherded, may with good reason regard herself mother. Certainly, for the work done, and for the pastor given, who more than a score of years exerted the molding influence, this church is under a lasting debt of gratitude, and will honor herself by cherishing a filial love for that church from which she received so much.

There was not at this time any other church organization on Chestnut Hill. The Methodists, while having “a class,” did not organize for ten years. The Presbyterian Church was not organized till May 10, 1852, the first Sabbath preaching having been May 25th of the previous year, (1851). Other churches were organized still later. It was twenty years earlier than the First Baptist Church of Germantown; four years earlier than the organization was effected at Falls of Schuylkill, in which Pastor Young had an

* “On September 17th (1834), we organized the church.” This is a record made by Mr. Young in his private journal. The writer, uncertain to which date to assign the organization, consulted Dr. I. Gilbert Young. Upon his suggestion, September 6th has been adopted in the narrative. This is done for the reason that it is this date that is given in the church book. The same record is found in the trustees' book, first item. These, in law, would be regarded as authoritative. The present writer can not presume to say which is correct.

active part, and one year earlier than the church at Hatborough. The First Norristown was organized two years earlier. Cold point, a colony of Chestnut Hill Church, was organized twenty years later, as the Plymouth Baptist Church. The nearest Baptist church was at Roxborough. In all Philadelphia, city and county, there were only seventeen Baptist churches. Of these, twelve were connected with the Philadelphia Association, and reported an aggregate membership of 2518. The largest was the New Market Street (now the Fourth), with 500 members.

How surprising the growth witnessed during the years that have intervened. Not only has Germantown itself assumed the proportions of a city, but it has, also, even become a Baptist metropolis, having six Baptist churches, three white, and three colored. According to the associational reports of 1897, five of these (one colored church not reporting) with a membership, severally, ranging from two hundred and sixty-six, to five hundred and eighty-eight, have an aggregate of twenty-two hundred and sixteen members. Philadelphia, as a whole, according to the same report, has eighty-three Baptist churches, with a membership aggregating 31,417. Seventeen report a membership between five hundred and a thousand; two, between a thousand and eleven hundred; and one, alone, a membership of 2693. The total contributions of these eighty-three churches, including home church expenses, amount to \$388,518.11. The total number of churches in the Philadelphia and North Philadelphia Associations, including the churches outside the city, is one hundred and forty-nine, with an aggregate membership of 42,414; baptisms for the year, 2604; and total contributions, including home church expenses, \$467,966.28.

• Articles of Faith. •

The following are the Articles of Faith adopted by the church, and the covenant according to which they were banded together.

Article First. We believe that there is but one, only, living and true God.

Article Second. We believe that God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in all the perfections of His nature, and that in the Godhead there are three persons, viz.: The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.

Article Third. We believe that the Word of God, contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only perfect rule of faith and practice.

Article Fourth. We believe that God created man in His own moral image, consisting of knowledge, righteousness and true holiness ; but that, by the fall, he has lost this blessed image and has become totally depraved.

Article Fifth. We believe that all beings, actions and events, both in the natural and moral world, are under God's providential control and direction, and are ordered and determined according to the eternal council of His own will ; but that this does in no wise interfere with the free agency of man.

Article Sixth. We believe that the Holy Ghost is the agent in the great work of regeneration, and that a holy life and good works are its necessary fruits.

Article Seventh. We believe that the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ are the only ground of the sinner's pardon and justification before God.

Article Eighth. We believe that all the redeemed of the Lord were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and are kept by the power of God through faith unto final and certain salvation.

Article Ninth. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and that the wicked, the finally impenitent, shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation, but the saints to the resurrection of everlasting life.

Article Tenth. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and are to be administered to believers only.

Article Eleventh. We believe that an immersion of the body in water, by a properly qualified administrator, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, is the only Gospel baptism.

Article Twelfth. We believe it is the duty of each member of the church to attend upon, and assist public worship, and contribute for its support.

• Church Covenant. •

We, the subscribers, desirous of walking in the fear of the Lord and in Christian fellowship with one another, acknowledging our utter unworthiness of the Divine favor, do voluntarily, through the assistance of the Holy Ghost, give up ourselves to the Lord and to one another, by the will of God, in a church capacity, to be one body under one head, jointly to exist, to act by the rules of the Gospel. And do promise and engage to do all things by Divine assistance in our different capacities that the Lord has commanded and required of us. Particularly to deny ourselves, take up our cross, follow Christ, keep the faith, assemble ourselves together, love the brethren, submit one to another in the Lord, bear one another's burthens, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And, finally, to honor and maintain those who have the rule over us in the Lord.

This is the covenant into which we solemnly enter, in the fear of God, humbly imploring the Divine assistance and blessing, that we may be built up to the glory of God, the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the edification and comfort of ourselves.

And now, to the only wise God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory and dominion, forever and ever. AMEN.

• Calling a Pastor. •

This little band, recognizing their opportunity and accepting the responsibility of the situation, at once set about equipping themselves for aggressive work. No time must be lost. On the seventeenth day of the month of their organization subscriptions were begun toward the erection of a suitable house of worship. The original subscription book, with all its details, is in the possession of I. Gilbert Young, M. D., a son of the first pastor, a resident of Chestnut Hill. Already deacons had been chosen and solemnly set apart to their work. Nor did the support of a pastor seem too much for this little band to undertake. It was perfectly natural that their hearts should turn to the one who had so successfully led in the launching of the enterprise. Accordingly, on the "thirty-first" of this same month, a unanimous call was extended to Rev. Robert F. Young to become pastor, at a salary of \$150 a year. The Philadelphia Association was, however, to be asked to aid in his support. For some time the pastor pieced out his salary by teaching a school. He used to say that this was more lucrative than preaching. Later, he abandoned this, as it interfered with his studies, and assumed the pastoral care of the Mt. Pleasant Church.

When the call was given, it was evidently proposed that Pastor Young should divide his labors between this, and the

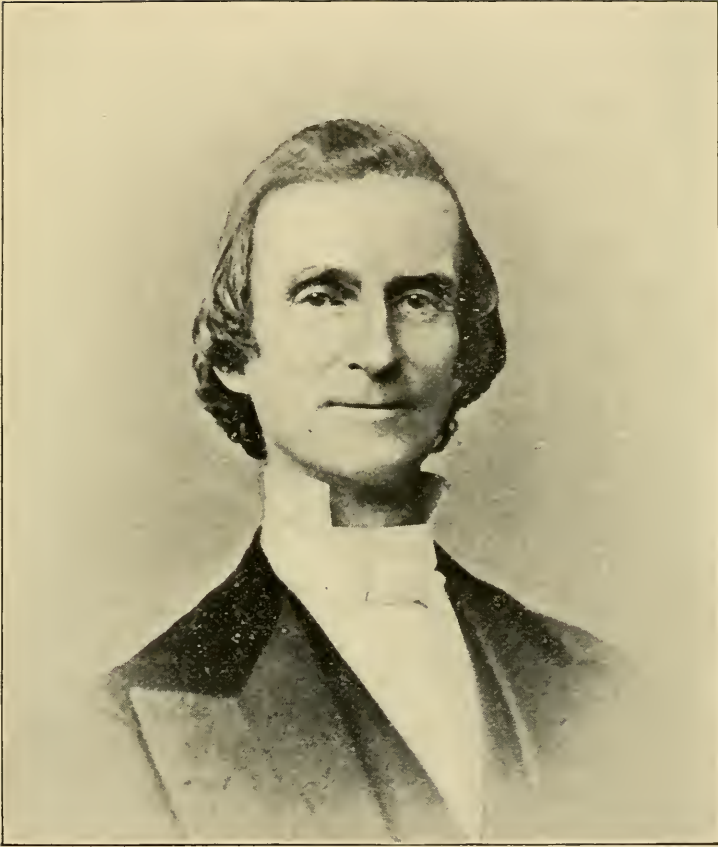
church at Milestown. This we infer from a record in the minutes of the Milestown church, under date of October 9th, 1834, as follows: "Brother Young, feeling it his duty to labor part of his time, at least, for the Chestnut Hill Church, sent us information of the same, together with a proposal to labor for us half of his time. Upon motion, it was 'Resolved, That we deem it highly important to have constant and regular preaching in this place. Therefore, we cannot accept of the proposition made by Brother Young.'" This action showed a truly dauntless spirit on the part of the Milestown Church. It was but a year since their own organization. A new house had just been dedicated, and, we may imagine, that such would be the circumstances that they would gladly share with a neighboring church the support of a pastor, a plan still in operation in many rural churches to-day. Equally dauntless was the spirit and faith of the new interest at Chestnut Hill. So important did they regard it that they should have the leadership of the one they had called, that they invited him to give them his entire time. The call was accepted, and about the same time, October, 1834, Mr. Young resigned the pastorate at Milestown, and, December 27th, moved to Chestnut Hill. A letter of dismissal was granted by the Milestown Church January 31st, which was received by the Chestnut Hill Church the next month. If it was a heroic faith for this band of seventeen to extend such a call, it was almost apostolic faith that would accept such a call. But God was guiding, as the future demonstrated. And it is always safe to follow where he leads. It is such a faith that God honors.

CHESTNUT HILL

• Pastor R. F. Young. •

It is most fitting that at this point should be given a sketch of this "man of God." And there are reasons that it should have more than a passing notice. Not only was he the founder of the interest, but, twice its pastor, his official connection covers almost one-third of the entire history of the church. Reckoning from the founding of the church, Mr. Young's active ministry here covered about nineteen and a half years. His first pastorate closed October 1st, 1849. After an absence of five years as the successful pastor of the First Baptist Church of Salem, N. J., he returned to Chestnut Hill, October, 1854, and continued till March, 1859. Thus, for the first twenty-five years, he was the most conspicuous factor, not only baptizing more than half of all that received baptism in the church's entire history, but also superintending the building of both the former, and the present, house of worship. This large space given to Pastor Young will not, therefore, be understood as in any way disparaging others who so faithfully served in the same relation.

Robert Fletcher Young was born near Coatesville, Chester county, Pa., September 4, 1810. His early years were spent on his father's farm. His conversion occurred in



PASTOR R. F. YOUNG

boyhood. When only seventeen years of age, feeling that he was called to preach the Gospel, he began a course of preparatory study of Latin and Greek at Moscow Academy, Chester county, Pa. Following this, two years were spent at Hamilton, N. Y. The father, not regarding favorably his son's aspirations to the Gospel ministry, did not give him the pecuniary encouragement that might reasonably have been expected. Not disheartened by the difficulties that beset him, he made the journey to Hamilton on foot. Part of the time, at least, while at school, he boarded himself in his own room, at a cost of twenty-five cents a week. These facts have been gleaned from his journal, which further records that the fare consisted "chiefly of bread made of corn and rye, not bolted, with rice, molasses and water." And this reflection is added: "The food truly is sweet, the sacrifice is truly small."

In the fall of 1833, but a youth of twenty-three, he began his labor as a pastor of the newly organized church at Milestown. Two years prior to this he had been licensed by the Bethesda Baptist Church of Chester county to exercise his gifts in preaching. February 19, 1834, he was ordained to the Gospel ministry. The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. W. D. Brantley, Sr., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Philadelphia, from the text in II Cor. iv. 5. January 8, 1836, he was married to Miss Maria Ann Gilbert, a daughter of Deacon Israel Gilbert, one of the original converts, baptized August 15, 1834. Concluding his work at Chestnut

Hill March 1, 1859, Mr. Young, at the request of the "Baptist Committee on City Missions," assumed charge of a new interest in the Nineteenth Ward, which the following May he organized as the Frankford Avenue Baptist Church, with twenty-six constituent members. Here he continued till December, 1861. By this time the membership had grown to one hundred and twenty-five. On the first of January, 1862, he entered upon the pastorate of the Haddonfield Baptist Church, N. J., where he continued, with remarkable success, till his death, which occurred January 4, 1884. His widow survives him. She lives at Haddonfield, her faculties unimpaired, at the age of eighty-two. During this pastorate, the church property was greatly improved, a debt liquidated, an elegant parsonage purchased, five successful mission schools established, and more than three hundred converts baptized. In the entire course of his ministry, covering a little less than fifty years, it was Mr. Young's privilege to baptize nine hundred and forty-six converts.

Mr. Young was a man of deep and genuine piety, one who truly "walked with God." Consecrated, devout, active, his daily walk was a living testimony to the power of the Gospel he so much loved to preach. His journal discloses the fact that he possessed an earnest desire to engage in foreign mission work. His interest was stirred by association with prospective missionaries in the same school. Among these was the late Dr. Vinton, who a part of the time was his room-mate and fellow-boarder at "twenty-five cents a

week." Not being permitted to carry the news of salvation to the heathen, he gave himself with unflagging zeal to the salvation of the lost at home. Impelled by such a spirit, he performed much labor outside his regularly appointed pastorates. This, his private journal abundantly attests. The record of baptisms shows that he administered the ordinance at Mt. Pleasant; here, however, as pastor, in connection with his work at Chestnut Hill; at Falls of Schuylkill, where he baptized "the first in that place," in 1838, the year the church was organized in that place; at Balligomingo, in 1839, the year from which dates the organization in that place, and where, for a time, he preached on Sunday afternoons; at Vincent and Hephzibah, Chester county; Lower Dublin and Blockley and Germantown. It is not to be doubted that in all these places he preached, as well as at others not named in this record. The result of his faithfulness in such work eternity alone can make known. In his intercourse with others he was genial, with a pleasant recognition for every one. And yet there was a dignified reserve, which to some seemed to border close upon austerity. This was doubtless due to a deep sense of the grave responsibility which rested upon him as a servant of the Most High. Diligent in his studies, thorough in the preparation of his sermons, in his labors abundant, faithful alike to God and to man, well may we thank God for his blessed life and fruitful labors.

"Servant of God, well done;
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

• The First House of Worship. •

But the new church must have a home of its own ; for a church without a home is like a family without a home, more or less of a vagrant. The Union Chapel could not be expected to be permanently available. It had, indeed, been a very Bethel to many, where God had met them, and where they had learned the blessedness of the forgiveness of sins, and adoption as children of God. There the Holy Spirit had wrought graciously, revealing to many their deep need, and bringing to their hearts peace, in believing. But in spite of the blessed associations of the place and its gracious influences, there were occasional ripples that disturbed the peace. Different sextons were employed by the different bodies of worshippers. On one occasion one sexton laid at the door of his fellow sexton the grievous charge of "stealing his ile." On every account it was better that the new church have a house of its own.

Accordingly, and in harmony with the early opening of subscriptions, as already referred to, Pastor Young and Deacon Gilbert started out one morning soon after to find a suitable lot. "It seemed," as Mrs. Young writes, "a hopeless task." But they returned delighted, reporting that "they had the best lot on the hill." And so it was. It was then used as a marble yard, and on special occasions as a place

to pitch the tent of the traveling circus. Learning that the lot was for sale, they found the owner, and closed the bargain on the spot. And well it was, for such was the antagonism to the little Baptist Church that efforts would have been made to prevent their getting it. At least, there were persons very outspoken in their opposition to the Baptists building "right among their church-people." The lot, thus purchased, was presented to the church. On September 29, 1835, the deed was executed by "Israel Gilbert and Jane, his wife, to Ezra Sands, Henry S. Lentz and Jonathan Gilbert, trustees (and their successors in office) * * * in trust for the use above mentioned, and for no other use or uses whatever (subject as aforesaid), to the only proper use and behoof of them, the grantees and the trustees, their successors forever." (Transcript from the deed.)

January 28, 1835, it was resolved to "build a meeting house 40 feet wide and 45 feet long * * * on the ground purchased by Israel Gilbert and offered to us for that purpose." The corner-stone was laid Saturday, May 23d, of the same year. The sermon on this occasion was preached by Rev. H. G. Jones, of Roxborough, from Exodus xxxiii. 14.

The rear and side walls remain as part of the present house, with twenty feet in length added at the front. After some years a gallery was added. The pulpit was both lofty and large, with room for several ministers, and, according to ancient custom, furnished with doors, shutting the preacher in, and the people out. The dedication service

occurred August 27th. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. L. Fletcher, pastor of the Great Valley Church, from Heb. x. 9. The Lord's day following Pastor Young preached from Zech. xiii. 7. The letter to the association that year reported that "a meeting house had recently been built." There was some unpaid debt, but how much is not mentioned for some years. March, 1843, it was almost \$500, and about the same in January, 1846. But this was all provided for before Mr. Young left, in 1849, the people of the place, as Mrs. Young relates, cheerfully aiding.

In the space at the front were two large paper-mulberry trees, casting a welcome shade in summer, and standing like sentinels in winter. Still farther front was a space utilized for hitching the horses of the people, who came from far and near.

Many interesting things might be recorded in connection with this house. Excepting the Union Chapel, it being the only house of worship on the hill, it is related that it was not unusual to have noted persons of other denominations worshipping with the Baptists of those early days. Especially among these is mentioned the famous Presbyterian, Rev. Albert Barnes, D. D., the author of "Barnes' Notes."

Thus, with a house of worship they could call their own, the new interest was, within a year of its organization, ready for aggressive work. How well they wrought, the story of the years that followed bears witness.

• A Fruitful Vine. •

Such, truly, this church has been. Four times only has it occurred that no baptisms were reported in the annual letter, and these in a space of about ten years in the later history.

The growth in numbers, in the earlier years especially, is truly astonishing. Reporting only nineteen members to the Philadelphia Association in 1834, in six years they had passed the one hundred mark, reporting in 1840 one hundred and two. In four years more, completing the first decade, the church reports a membership of two hundred and five. In this earlier history there were some exceedingly fruitful years. The number of baptisms reported October, 1842, was forty-three. The next year exceeded even this, being fifty-three. But 1854 seems to have been, in this particular, the most fruitful year in the church's entire history. That year the unprecedented number of fifty-six baptisms is reported. The next lower than the numbers for these various years just noted, was thirty-six. This was in 1856.*

Let it not be imagined, however, that this remarkable growth was due to popular favor or absence of all opposition. For such was not the case. This is made very clear by a

* See Appendix D.

single statement in Mr. Young's journal, which contains this record of the work : "The opposition we met with was very great, yet the work went on and the prospect was encouraging." There are similar hints given at other points in the history.

These converts were drawn from varied sources. Not only were they gathered from the world, but there were accessions to the ranks from among the Episcopalians, the Methodists, the German Reformed, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians and, even, the Friends and Roman Catholics. There is recorded, also, the baptism of one negro. Nor were the candidates limited to any special period of life. Young and old alike were gathered in. A most striking and interesting instance of this occurred on May 20, 1843, when Christopher Carr, only a month lacking of one hundred and one years, and his great-granddaughter, Elizabeth A. Fisher, aged ten were baptized. The former had been a Revolutionary soldier, but was still vigorous and hearty. On the occasion of his baptism he walked to the Wissahickon and back. His life thereafter was most earnest and devout, giving clear testimony to the Divine power of the Gospel he had received. After two and a half years of loving and earnest discipleship, he died, December 18, 1845, at the age of 103 years and six months. Several of his descendants—both great and great-great-grandchildren, are to-day with us in church fellowship.

From among the converts were raised up several ministers of the Gospel. One especially may be mentioned in this

connection—Rev. Joseph L. Sagebeer. He was baptized into the fellowship of this church, and some years later united with the Cold Point Church, thence entering the ministry. A fuller sketch of this excellent man will be given under that heading.

Nor was any preference shown as to any particular season of the year for administering the ordinance. Many were baptized during the warmer months, others in the coldest weather, the clothing of the candidates often freezing stiff long before the house was reached where it was to be exchanged for that which was dry; but no case of any harm resulting therefrom has been recorded. The baptistry in the church was used for the first time December 13, 1857. Previous to that time different out-door places were used—the Wissahickon, and the streams at Mermaid and the Wheel Pump.

In connection with these large ingatherings, it must not be forgotten that for many years this was purely missionary ground, there being no other organized church in the place. In addition to this, purely as a Baptist church, it covered a much greater territory. It was eighteen years before the First Baptist Church of Germantown was organized, and more than thirty years before the Second Germantown began its work. The church at Cold Point was a colony from this church, so that the separate organizations at these latter places by so much narrowed the territory as pertained to strictly Baptist work. As noted elsewhere, Pastor Young preached and baptized at Falls of Schuylkill, Lower Dublin, Plymouth (now Cold Point), Balligomingo, Mt. Pleasant, Milestown and Germantown.

• The Cold Point Baptist Church. •

Reference has been made to Pastor Young's fervent missionary spirit and far-reaching evangelistic activities. While in several places he was instrumental in organizing churches, in only one instance was such organization effected under the fostering care of the Chestnut Hill Church. After about eighteen years of work, the Plymouth, now Cold Point Church, was organized. It was constituted by fifty-three members who, for this purpose, received letters of dismission from the mother church. The designation the church now bears is from an elevation of that name upon which the meeting-house is built. It is about four miles north of Chestnut Hill, in Whitemarsh township, Montgomery county, overlooking the beautiful Whitemarsh Valley. As Mr. Young was the one who instituted the work which led to the organization of the church, the story of the beginnings is best told in his own words, as quoted in an excellent historical sketch of the church, written in 1885, by Pastor John T. Griffiths, and printed in the minutes of the North Philadelphia Baptist Association of that year. Mr. Young writes as follows :

“ I commenced preaching at Mt. Pleasant, in connection with Chestnut Hill, in 1835. Abraham Marple and his



PASTOR E. R. TILTON

wife resided in Plymouth. I baptized his wife into the fellowship of the Mt. Pleasant Church, August 13, 1836; they attended Mt. Pleasant. After a time I commenced preaching at Cold Point School House. For a time it was with some difficulty we could keep any kind of order, the most of those who attended were so rough in their ways; but with the aid of Abraham Marple we finally secured pretty good behavior. As the Gospel began to be felt, souls began to inquire. 'What must I do to be saved?' The interest increasing, several were baptized at Chestnut Hill. The first baptism in Plymouth was in a dam made in a little stream not far from Abraham Marple's house. The candidates were Harriet Hampton, Lydia Hellens and Rebecca Newtry, baptized November 5, 1840. Among those converted and baptized was a boy, who lived on a farm—now Rev. J. L. Sagebeer, at present at Mt. Pleasant and Ambler. He is an excellent minister, and has done much good. After a time I bought the lot; I paid \$100 for it, taking the deed in my own name. After building the first meeting-house and paying for it, except \$9 debt on it, I went to Salem, New Jersey, leaving about forty Baptists in Plymouth. I transferred the meeting-house lot to other hands by my deed. After I left, the church was organized."

This same sketch, quoting from the "Baptist Cyclopaedia," adds: "Mr. Young began preaching on Lord's-day afternoons, and occasionally during the week, in the school-house at Cold Point, in Plymouth, Montgomery county.

By subscriptions which he obtained, he bought a lot and built the first house of worship there, baptizing about forty converts, who retained their membership at Chestnut Hill until the Plymouth Church was organized." In the abstract of letters to the Philadelphia Association, 1846, it is recorded that they "have nearly completed during the year, at Plymouth, one of their out-stations, a new meeting-house, where preaching is regularly maintained."

Looking toward the organization of a church, several meetings were held to consider the expediency of such a step. The first of these was January 11, 1854. At this time the following was adopted :

"RESOLVED, That we consider it expedient that a Baptist church be organized in this place, and a pastor called: provided, sufficient means can be raised for his support.

RESOLVED, That a committee of five be appointed to wait on the people and see what they will subscribe towards the support of the ministry."

As the outcome of this action, April 5th of the same year, an organization was effected by the fifty-three persons dismissed from the mother church. As expressing their views of doctrine and ordinances, J. Newton Brown's Church Manual was adopted. One deacon was elected at this time, namely, John Getman. On the nineteenth of this same month, a council, consisting of pastors and delegates from neighboring Baptist churches, was called by invitation of

the newly-organized body, to consider the propriety of recognizing them as a regular Baptist church. Six churches responded to the invitation. They were the Chestnut Hill, Germantown, Schuylkill Falls, Balligomingo, Norristown and Bridgeport. The council was presided over by the Rev. J. Newton Brown, then of Germantown. By formal vote of the council, after due consideration, it was voted to recognize the new body as the Plymouth Baptist Church. The services, connected with formal recognition, were held Thursday evening, April 27th. The same year, the church was received into the fellowship of the Central Union Association, but withdrew, four years later, to unite with the North Philadelphia Association when that body was organized.

The church has had two houses of worship. The first, built under the leadership of Pastor Young, was used till the year 1868, when the one at present in use was built. Regarding this house, Mr. Griffiths' historical sketch makes the following statement: "It is a commodious house of worship, built of stone. It contains, in addition to the audience room, a room for the primary department, and two changing rooms for baptismal candidates, and is 40 feet by 60 feet in dimensions. It stands a short distance west of the old church. All the water used in building the last meeting-house, which was 363 hogsheads, was hauled by Deacon Jonathan Batroff; and all the lime, which was 1500 bushels, was furnished by Deacon David Marple. In con-

nection with these two houses, the church owns about one acre of ground." In 1886 an additional acre was purchased to enlarge the cemetery.

From the church two have gone into the ministry. The first of these was the Rev. Joseph L. Sagebeer, already referred to. On the sixteenth of December, 1843, a boy of sixteen, he was baptized into the fellowship of the Chestnut Hill Church. Two years later, and nine years prior to the organization of the Cold Point Church, he was dismissed by letter to some other church. Later, uniting with this church, from its fellowship entered upon the Gospel ministry. From the report on obituaries in the minutes of the Pennsylvania Baptist State Mission Society for 1890, we quote the following :

Rev. Joseph L. Sagebeer died at Clifton Heights, June 5, 1890, at the age of 63. Born in 1827, he was baptized in 1843 and ordained at Balligomingo, February 21, 1856. Here he remained as pastor until 1860, when he became the first pastor at Allentown. He then spent eight years at Willistown and seven more at Vincent, Chester county. He next served the church at Newtown Square seven years, and that at Mt. Pleasant three years, and was in the third year of his pastorate at Coatesville at the date of his death. With the beginning of the present year he was taken with "La Grippe," which produced extreme nervous prostration and ended in heart failure. Brother Sagebeer was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and did much

earnest, loving service for the Master in his ministry of thirty-four years.

The other, referred to as having entered the ministry, is Rev. William J. Coulston. He was graduated from Bucknell University in 1883, and from Rochester Theological Seminary two years later. He has been pastor of several important churches, and is, at present, settled with the Baptist Church at Elizabeth, Pa. One of the present members George L. Bayard, is pursuing preparatory studies in Bucknell University.

Up to the time of formal organization, the church was supplied by the different pastors of the Chestnut Hill Church. Since then, as settled pastors, it has had, first, however, as supply, Rev. Thomas C. Trotter, May, 1854, to August, 1855; then, as pastor, till June, 1859; Rev. William Coxey, December, 1859, to January, 1862; Rev. Jesse B. Williams, from July, 1862, to January, 1866; and a second time, from June, 1869, to April, 1870; Rev. A. H. Folwell, from October, 1866, to September, 1867; Rev. H. H. Leamy, from April, 1870, to December, 1872; Rev. C. B. Dalbey, from January, 1874, to July, 1874; Rev. R. Kocher, from October, 1874, to November, 1880; Rev. J. C. Jacob, from May, 1882, to October, 1884; Rev. J. T. Griffiths, from May, 1885, to May, 1887; Rev. George E. Weeks, November, 1887, to March, 1891; Rev. C. B. Furman, from June, 1891, to December, 1894; Rev. D. J. R. Strayer, from April, 1894, to July, 1896; and the present pastor, Rev. E. R. Tilton, whose term of service dates from June, 1897.

The condition of the church in 1885, the time of the preparation of Mr. Griffiths' sketch, is noted in the following quotation :

“The present condition of the church is very encouraging, perfect harmony prevails, two weekly meetings are well attended; we have a flourishing Sunday-school and very good congregations. As the church looks to the past, she can truly say, ‘Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,’ and as she looks to the future, she can take courage and press on.” Up to that time (September, 1885), a total of 262 persons had been received by baptism, 57 by letter, and the membership numbered 157. The losses had been 83 by letter and 36 by death, and 14 of the original number were still surviving. There had been, of course, losses in other ways. As to these the present writer has not been informed.

The Sunday School was organized in the spring of 1843, at the suggestion of Miss Matilda Stebbins. The organization was effected in the Cold Point Schoolhouse. Meeting the following Sunday, the doors were found shut against them. This was on the ground of an objection presented by one of the directors, namely, that some of the teachers were not converted. About twenty, in all, teachers and scholars, were present. Mrs. Ann Hallman very cordially threw open the doors of her house to the school. Two weeks later, through the influence of Pastor Young and Mr. Abraham Marple, the schoolhouse was reopened for them.

As to the present condition, it may be said that, situated

in the midst of a prosperous farming community, the church exerts a large influence for good. Harmony prevails. Large congregations attend upon the preaching of the Word. While, during the present pastorate, no extra meetings have been held, yet, in that brief time, twenty-two additions have been made to the membership, and the pastor reports that others are inquiring the way of life. The present membership is 130; the total number baptized from the first, 330. The prospect is regarded as encouraging. With regard to the past, while there have been, in common with other churches, seasons of prosperity and periods of dearth, there have been abundant evidences that this is a vine of God's planting, and the mother church has good reason to congratulate herself upon having so worthy a daughter.



• The Millerite Craze. •

In the "forties" the Chestnut Hill Church was threatened by a more than ordinary peril. The doctrines of William Miller, which had gained so many adherents in New York, and the New England States, were carried into Chestnut Hill by an enthusiastic advocate. Mr. Miller, by his study of the Scriptures, had reached the conclusion that the return of Christ, for which we are commanded to look and to be prepared, was to occur on the 23d of April, 1843. It is recorded of the followers of Mr. Miller that "some neglected their business; they had property enough to support them till the final conflagration, and why should they accumulate more? Some, who were poor, quartered themselves upon those who were rich; some gave away their property to those who wished to use it. There were others, however, who were more considerate. They continued to work at their calling, built houses, substantial fences and conducted themselves in all respects as they would if the world was to continue many years, and assigned as a reason for so doing that the command of Christ was, 'Occupy till I come.'" "It has long been handed down as a tradition, possibly quite unfounded," writes another, "that many Millerites made themselves ascension robes, and during all

the day waited in prayer, some of them on the roofs of their houses, for the coming of the Lord." And thus, a doctrine, so much emphasized in the New Testament, was perverted, and in this form caused not a little trouble for the young church and its pastor. How successfully it was combatted is best told by an eye witness, the widow of that pastor.

"The Millerite craze," she writes, "came to us in the forties from Norristown. Mr. Barnard, pastor there, was a New York man, and brought the doctrine with him. A member of the church moving to the Hill set it going. He wanted the church for Millerite meetings and have Mr. Barnard come and preach. Mr. Young would have none of it, and the trustees backed him up in it. He (the Millerite brother) held private meetings and made much trouble for the young pastor and the church. One good old lady said she thought that if the Lord wanted any one to know when He was coming, He would have let Brother Young know. But it passed away." Mrs. Young adds that the usefulness of those who were taken by the delusion was seriously affected.



• The Present House of Worship. •

It is not a matter for surprise that a house forty feet by forty-five, built when the membership was but thirty-five, should be found inadequate to the demands twenty years later, when the membership considerably exceeded two hundred. Thus, we find that, as early as February 12, 1852, during the pastorate of Mr. Walton, a committee was appointed "to find out the cost of a building for an addition to the church." Nothing more seems to have been done until after the second settlement of Mr. Young as pastor, in 1854. On the 1st of January, 1855, a committee was appointed "to form a plan and find out the cost as near as they can for remodeling the church." Two years of discussion followed before anything definite was determined upon. Finally, January 1, 1857, it was "resolved that the Building Committee proceed with the building, get it under roof, finish the basement story, and if funds go no further, wait till such funds may be obtained." The associational letter that same year reported that the church was "engaged in building a new house of worship, in which they needed aid from Christian brethren."

Thus, the work went forward, and in December of the same year "the lecture room was opened with appropriate services, participated in by Rev. Warren Randolph, Ben-



PRESENT HOUSE OF WORSHIP (1857 and 1872).

From Photograph by F. P. Streeper

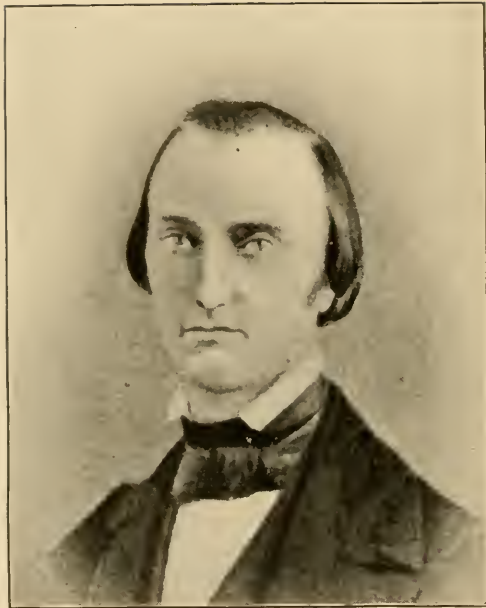
jamin Griffith and Thomas Winter." The main audience room was used only on baptismal occasions. September 2, 1858, the trustees voted that the pastor, Mr. Young, "have \$200 of the proceeds of the ladies' fair toward finishing the main audience room," and, on November 2d, it was "resolved that the main audience of our house of worship be opened on the fourth Lord's day of this month." On this occasion the sermon was preached by Rev. William Brantley, Jr., pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church. The prayer of many was that "the glory of this latter house might be greater than that of the former."

Some debt remained upon the work thus completed, but, how much, nowhere in the records of the church is distinctly stated till July, 1866, when, from a record in the minutes we learn that "in the erection and completion of our house of worship, a deficit of over eight hundred dollars was then, and up to this time remains, uncanceled." This minute, however, is made in connection with a successful effort on the part of Pastor Case to raise the money by which the debt was paid off. The letter that year to the association reports that they have "paid off the debt."

• The Sunday School. •

It is unfortunate that so little record has been kept of the Bible School—almost absolutely none whatever in the church records. Some very meagre references to it are gleaned from the association minutes. The first mention found is in the report of the year 1839. The school that year reported fifty-six scholars. It is not likely that this is the beginning of the school, although the first mention. The highest number recorded is two hundred and thirteen. This was in the year 1851. Here, the faithful, then as now, found opportunity for Christian work, and from this source, we may believe, many of the accessions to the ranks of the church were drawn.





PASTOR LEMUEL WALTON

• Pastor Lemuel Walton. •

Concerning this excellent man, we must be content to know that his record is on high. As the result of most careful inquiry, it has been possible to gather but a few isolated facts of his life.

He was licensed by the Central Church, Philadelphia, in 1845, and was graduated from Hamilton about 1845. To the pastorate of the Chestnut Hill Church, his only one, he was called by unanimous vote, December 6, 1849, and entered upon the work the first of January, 1850, coming from the Eleventh Church, Philadelphia. His ministry was a fruitful one, there being forty-seven baptisms recorded for the years he was pastor. On the fifth of May, 1853, he rested from his labors, at the age of thirty-four. He died of consumption. His body lies in the cemetery at the rear of the church, awaiting his descending Lord, when he shall come forth to meet the Lord in the air.

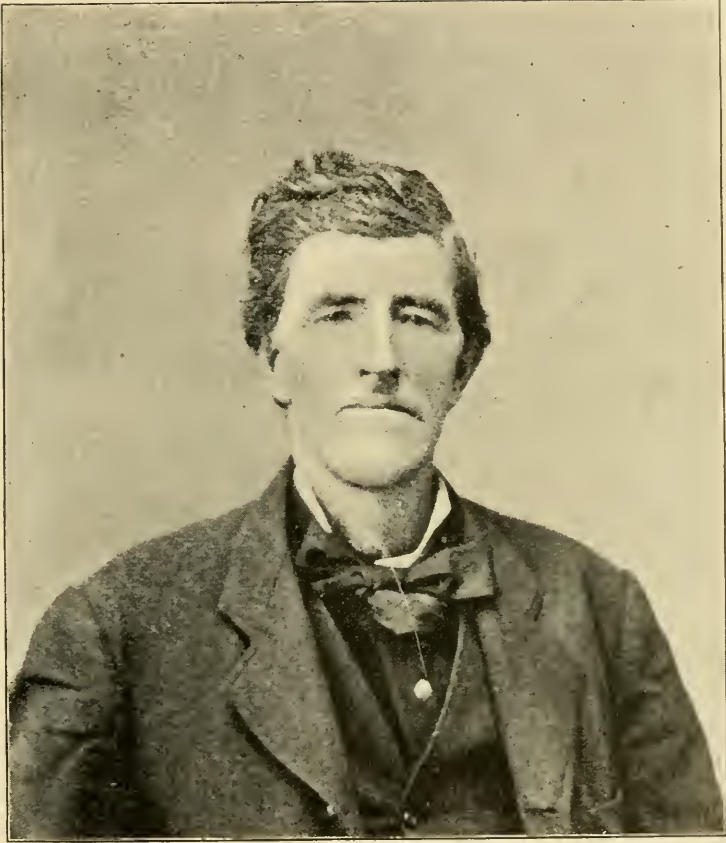
A double burden of grief was laid upon the church in the space of a few weeks. Only two months previous to Mr. Walton's death, March 4th, Deacon Israel Gilbert was called away, at the age of 63 years, 7 months and 20 days. Being one of the constituent members, one of the first deacons, and the generous donor of the lot on which the meeting house had been built as well as that used for burial purposes, his loss would naturally be the more deeply felt. The letter to the association this same year refers to this double bereavement in the following words: "We have been called upon to pass through deep affliction the past year, in the death of our beloved pastor, Lemuel Walton, and of Deacon Israel Gilbert."

• Pastor Washington Barnhurst. •

Mr. Barnhurst entered upon the pastorate of the church, evidently, very soon after the death of Mr. Walton. It is only three months later that we find him appointed a member of a committee to arrange for an ordination, which can hardly be any other than his own. His term of service covers only about a year, but no other year in the entire history of the church records so many baptisms, namely, fifty-six. We are thus led to infer that he was a worker of great efficiency. And yet it must not be forgotten that a highly successful pastorate had preceded this, a pastorate brought to a close by the untimely death of "the beloved pastor," as he is called in the letter of 1853 to the association. Thus, not only was there the sowing of that pastorate from which to reap, but the death of the one who had wrought so well could not but have a quickening effect upon the evangelistic work immediately following. After Mr. Barnhurst's withdrawal, the first pastor, the Rev. R. F. Young, again entered upon the pastorate, October, 1854.

successful pastorate, he resigned in November, 1864. Subsequently he was pastor at Mullica Hill, N. J., and later at Columbus, in the same State, where he built a house of worship. From Columbus he was called a second time to Rahway. He then came to Philadelphia, where he was instrumental in organizing the East Baptist Church. While here, he was taken seriously sick, from the effects of which he never sufficiently recovered to assume again the care of a large church. Seeing an opportunity in the northern part of the city for effective work, gathering a few Baptists together, he began holding prayer meetings, and organized a Sunday-school, which resulted in the formation of the Lehigh Avenue Baptist Church. Still later he was pastor of the Manatawna Church for a period of three years, October, 1884, to September, 1887. His last pastorate was at Fox Chase, in this city. Increasing age was beginning to render the care of a church burdensome. Still, his desire to preach was strong, but he contented himself with supplying pulpits. The last sermon he preached was at Easton, where he began his ministry. This was only about a week before his death, which occurred September 18, 1894, at the ripe age of eighty.''

While the five and a half years of Pastor Tolan's ministry at Chestnut Hill were not relatively as fruitful in baptisms as the former pastorates in this same church, two things must be borne in mind. The first is, that it was during the excitement and distraction of the Civil War, when it was more difficult to turn the thoughts in the direction of the



DEACON SETH STOUT

Elected August 27, 1867.

Gospel, and that emotions rather averse to the Gospel of peace were likely to sway the minds of the people. But it must be regarded as one of the highest testimonials to the faithfulness and evangelical character of that ministry, that in the exciting year of 1862, the church letter reported twenty-four baptisms. The total during this pastorate was forty-two. The other fact to be considered is that Chestnut Hill was no longer missionary ground. Other churches had sprung up and were sharing gospel work on the Hill with this church.

The work of this servant of God bears abundant evidence that he was "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."



• A Transition. •

The close of Mr. Tolan's pastorate not only completes almost one-half of the entire history of the church (thirty of the sixty-three years), but marks an important transition. All the pastors who have served hitherto "rest from their labors." The one immediately following is still in active service. It is to be noted, also, that radical changes are taking place. From a community of country villagers and plain farmers, Chestnut Hill is becoming transformed into a fashionable suburb. This necessarily modifies the work of the church, and, to a considerable extent, explains the falling off in the number of accessions during this latter half of the history. Not taking into account these changed conditions, would be unfair toward the men who, during these latter years, have served so faithfully as pastors of the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church.

The story, from this juncture, will be, therefore, more briefly told. In the first place, there is much less to tell. This is, at once, evident. Another reason for brevity is that the events are too recent to have taken on the character of history, and, hence, must be left for future historians to recount. And yet those who read this story will demand, at least, brief sketches of the different pastors. And this is all that will be attempted, with the addition, in each case, of such things in these respective pastorates as may claim special note.



PASTOR W. W. CASE

• Pastor W. W. Case. •

Rev. William Wickham Case was born August 30, 1839, at Perth Amboy, N. J. His father, Rev. John Case, was an honored Baptist minister who served churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and died at Hawley, Pa., July 14, 1886.

Mr. Case was graduated from Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa., July 30, 1863. For six weeks the college had been closed by reason of the large number of students and teachers who had enlisted in the United States service for the emergency. The graduating class, which had been connected with the Twenty-eighth Pennsylvania Militia, returned just in time for the commencement exercises. Mr. Case was called to the pastorate of the Berwick, Pa., Baptist Church, and was ordained to the Gospel ministry, November 5th of the same year. In 1864 he became chaplain of the One Hundred and Ninety-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteers (one hundred days' regiment) and served till regularly mustered out. April 1, 1865, he entered upon the pastorate of the Chestnut Hill Church, where he remained till November, 1868, when he withdrew to become pastor at New London, Connecticut. After a little less than a year in his pastorate he returned to Chestnut Hill, in response to a unanimous call, November, 1869. He remained till September, 1871. These two pastorates covered altogether a little less than five and a half years.

During the first pastorate at this place he was married, September 6, 1866, to Miss Mary E. Kline, of Berwick, Pa. Of the three children—all daughters—born to Mr. and Mrs. Case, two were born at Chestnut Hill.

The years since leaving Chestnut Hill have been spent in New Jersey pastorates. The first was at Hamilton Square, covering a period of ten years, and beginning October, 1871. As indications of God's blessing, there are recorded 144 baptisms, the building of a house of worship, and the founding of a new church at Allentown. December, 1881, a twelve-year pastorate was inaugurated at Holmdel. One hundred and twenty-four baptisms, the remodelling of the house of worship, and the building of a chapel and a parsonage are the substantial tokens of a prosperous pastorate. Following this, was a pastorate of a little over three years with the First Baptist Church of West Hoboken. And from December, 1896, dates the present pastorate at Rutherford.

During these years Mr. Case's work has not been confined to the limits of the churches over which he has presided. While at Chestnut Hill he served as clerk of both the Philadelphia Baptist Association and the Baptist Ministers' Conference. In New Jersey he has not only held associational offices, but has been for twenty-one years a member of the Board of Managers of the Baptist State Convention, and has been for many years on the Board of Corporators of Peddie Institute. While thirty-four years—more than a third of a century—of active ministry are likely to show their wearing



DEACON J. S. RAHN

Elected June 13, 1872

effect upon a man, yet it would seem that upon Mr. Case they have left no trace of vigor reduced, or zeal abated, or efficiency impaired.

As already stated, Mr. Case was twice pastor at Chestnut Hill. In taking note of items of interest, however, this will be regarded as one pastorate, there having been no settled pastor during the interim. It was no slight compliment that he should be recalled for a second term of service by a unanimous vote. Equally was the church's action a compliment to itself.

As a mark of the esteem in which he was held, it may be noted that on his return to Chestnut Hill, on the occasion of his marriage, he found that his house had been largely furnished during his absence. It was his privilege to baptize seventy-three converts. The years '66 and '67 were marked by gracious revivals, there being reported for these years twenty-six baptisms each. Two members were licensed to preach the Gospel—John W. Smith, December 14, 1865, and Charles T. Hallowell, December 16, 1867. The latter was at the time attending Bucknell University, having been recommended to the Education Society, August 17, 1865. He graduated from college in 1870. He was engaged in missionary work, and lives at Park Rapids, Minnesota. Of Mr. Smith the present writer can record only that he was dismissed by letter to Eleventh Baptist Church the year following.

From the building—or rebuilding—of the present

house of worship, in 1857, till the coming of Mr. Case, the church had been greatly harassed by a debt of about \$800. Near the close of the first year of the pastorate (March 15, 1866), the church entertained favorably the pastor's proposition to undertake the payment of this debt. The success of the effort is best indicated in a record made July 12th of the same year, setting forth the gratitude of the church in the raising of the required amount, and most heartily thanking the "beloved pastor" for his earnest and efficient efforts. Hitherto, the church had not owned a parsonage, but February 21, 1870, it was voted to purchase the property, still owned by the church, on Highland avenue. In the letter of the church to the Philadelphia Association, 1871, the year that Mr. Case closed his labors with this church, a total membership of 184 was reported.

May 15, 1869, during the interval between the two pastorates of Mr. Case, occurred the death of Deacon Ezra Sands, at the ripe age of 83 years, 2 months and 8 days. As one of the constituent members, he was also one of the first deacons. The following is from the Church Book: "He died after a short, but painful illness, which he bore with Christian fortitude and resignation. His end was peaceful and tranquil, retaining his faculties in a remarkable manner so long as he was able to converse, and died in the triumphs of faith, a full assurance of a blissful immortality beyond the grave.

"This short notice is recorded as a tribute of respect to an aged faithful servant of God, and for many years a member of the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church."



PASTOR I. D. KING

• Pastor I. D. King. •

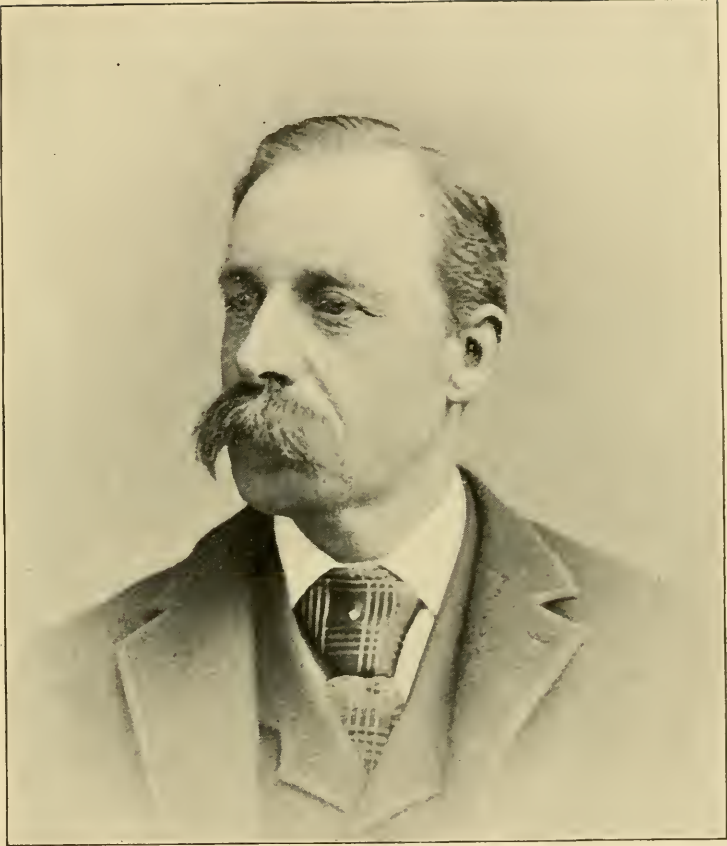
The facts for the following sketch have been kindly furnished by Miss Clara L. King, Pastor King's daughter.

Israel Davis King was born in Baltimore, Md., in the year 1824. His parents, soon after, returned to Chester county, Pa. The earlier years of his life were spent on his father's farm in the Great Valley. His parents were members of the Great Valley Baptist Church. At the age of sixteen, he entered upon mercantile life with his brother, then a wholesale dry goods merchant on Market street, Philadelphia. Being converted soon after coming to the city, he was baptized into the fellowship of the Spruce Street Church, by Rev. T. O. Lincoln. In the year 1846, Mr. King was married to Miss Mary E. Walter. Of the five children born to them, only two daughters lived to grow up.

From his earliest years, Mr. King had desired to become a minister of the Gospel. He was not, however, ordained to that work until 1854. He immediately entered upon the pastorate of the church at Smithfield, Fayette county, Pa. Two years later he took charge of the church at Uniontown, where his labors were rewarded with rich ingatherings. After this, he was pastor at Portsmouth, Ohio, then at Granville, and afterward at Monroeville, in the same State. In

1869, a call was accepted from the church at Phoenixville, Pa. Here he succeeded in bringing into harmony and active organized work, two very discordant and contending factions. It was from Phoenixville that Mr. King came, in 1872, to Chestnut Hill. After three years of earnest service, he removed to the city, and the following year established a mission at Twenty-third and Oxford streets, which subsequently developed into the Centennial Baptist Church. The pastor's hopes for the perpetuation of a strong active church, after several years of toil and struggle, and the building of a house of worship, seemed about to be realized, when serious dissensions sprang up, which almost destroyed the church. The anxiety and disappointment thus occasioned resulted in permanent impairment of his health. A pastorate of about three years at Bristol was his last. Returning to the city, the closing years of his life were occupied in editorial work, taking charge of the religious news in the "Philadelphia Press." His death occurred May 16, 1893, after nine months of untold suffering from valvular disease of the heart. His, was a life of loving devotion and faithful service. While now he "rests from his labors, his works follow him."

Mr. King's pastorate, lasting about three and a half years, was in some particulars, rather an eventful one. Just about the time that the call was extended to him, the church voted to abolish the pew-renting system, which had been in operation for many years. In its stead was adopted the system of weekly offerings, "the plan enjoined," as the min-



DEACON W. H. H. HEYDRICK

Elected June 13, 1872.



utes record, "by the Apostle Paul, I Cor., xvi. 2," and, as it further adds, "a manner easy for all, and oppressive to none, and at the same time, promoting habits of system and economy." The transition, therefore, to the method with some modifications, still in use, was made during this pastorate. The organ at present used in the auditorium was purchased near the same time. In June, 1874, the prayer meeting was changed from Friday to Wednesday evening, though the change had been for some years under consideration.

When the present house of worship was erected it was left somewhat incomplete, in contemplation of adding a tower to serve as belfry, and awaiting for such time as sufficient funds might be available for defraying the expense thereof. During this same year (1874) the work was pushed to completion, at a cost of over \$1500, including the purchase of the bell and clock. A portion of the money was realized from the sale of a piece of ground, about fifty feet in depth, from the rear part of the graveyard. The balance—everything being paid for at the time—was, through the indefatigable efforts of the pastor, secured from the members and friends of the church and the citizens of the place.

In purely spiritual lines the work was pushed with vigor. Action taken by the church during the pastorate immediately preceding, was renewed, viz.: Adopting a schedule for taking offerings at specified times for each, the American Baptist Publication Society, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, State Missions and Ministerial Education. Thirty-five baptisms are recorded for this period, and the church at the close of this pastorate reported a membership of two hundred and ten, a number that has not been reached since.

• Pastor Edwin MacMinn. •

Rev. Edwin MacMinn, who entered upon the pastorate January 1, 1876, was born at Unionville, Centre county, Pa., May 12, 1852. He received his education in the public schools, Dickinson Seminary, the Commercial College of Williamsport, Richmond College, Richmond, Va., and Crozer Theological, from which latter institution he was graduated in the class of 1874. He was baptized at Williamsport in 1868, and in 1870 was licensed to preach by the Freemason Street Baptist Church, of Norfolk, Va. His first pastorate was at West Chester, where his ordination occurred in 1874. The following year he resigned the pastorate to take up evangelistic work. Accepting a call to the pastorate at Chestnut Hill, he entered upon the work January 1, 1876. Closing his work here March 1, 1879, he became State Secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society, which position he resigned to enter the pastorate of the Baptist Church at Easton, Pa. From Easton, he removed to Moorestown, N. J., January 1, 1883, where he served in the pastorate till May 15, 1890. While there he baptized 152. May 15, 1890, he settled with the Summit Avenue Baptist Church, Jersey City. Here it was his privilege to baptize 156. During the season of 1896 he took charge of the Fresh Air Work of Jersey City, providing for



PASTOR EDWIN MacMINN

a week at the seashore for 256 children. Since March, 1897, he has been pastor of the First Baptist Church, Salem, N. J.

Mr. MacMinn was married in 1875 to Miss Lizzie Rupert, of Oxford, Pa. Two children have been born to them. The oldest, a daughter, died at Chestnut Hill. The second, a son, was born at Moorestown.

Mr. MacMinn has been author as well as pastor, having written a number of Sunday School and Temperance books. He has also written upon scientific subjects, being quite an enthusiast in natural science. His cabinet of minerals is said to be one of the finest private collections in the United States.

The two pastorates that immediately preceded Mr. MacMinn's had been characterized by so much in the way of debt-paying, purchase and improvement of property, that not much in this line, at least, is to be looked for. Yet there are not lacking indications that the pastorate was an aggressive one even in this direction. The present excellent plan for the care of the Sunday School library, and the substitution of chairs for the old-fashioned kind of seating in the lecture-room, were some of the improvements made, the benefit of which we still enjoy. Large congregations attended upon the preaching of the Word, and sixteen baptisms are recorded as a part of the spiritual fruitage.

• Pastor B. F. Robb. •

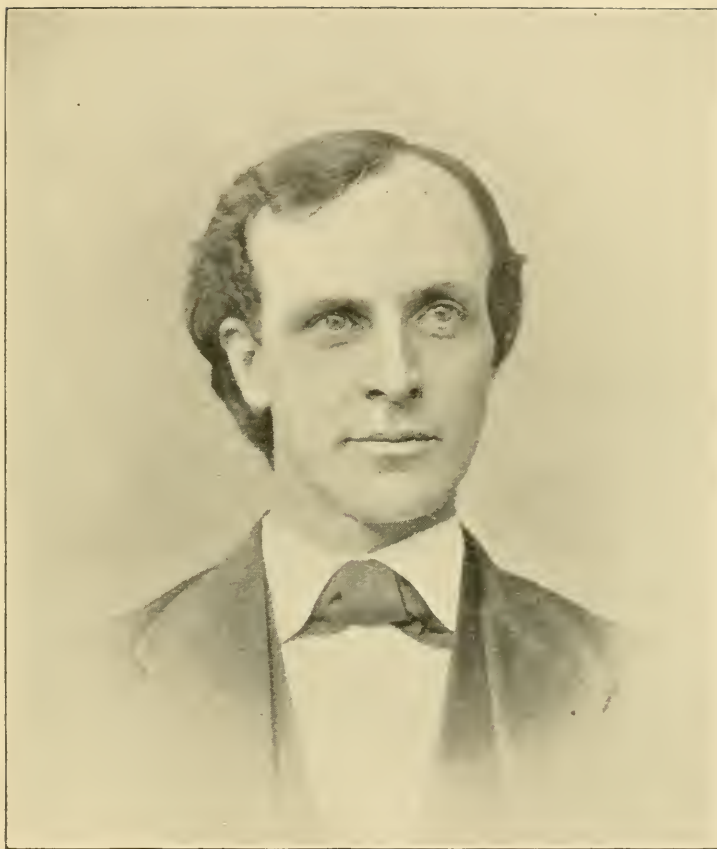
We are indebted to Mrs. Robb for the following sketch of her husband :

“ Benjamin Franklin Robb was born in Philadelphia, December 11, 1842. When a boy he learned the trade of machinist. May 5, 1861, just after the outbreak of the civil war, though still under age, he enlisted in the service of his country, with the Twenty-sixth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers. He was severely wounded at the battle of Chancellorsville, and was honorably discharged December 21, 1863.

After his return from the war, having a strong conviction that he was called to preach the Gospel, he entered Bucknell University, where he completed a four years' course in three years, and was graduated in 1871. Entering Crozer Theological Seminary, he took the full course, and was graduated with the class of 1874. While a student at Bucknell, he preached during summer vacations at Coudersport, Pa.

After his graduation from Crozer, Mr. Robb spent a year abroad, visiting the Holy Lands. During these travels he successfully conducted a party up the Nile.

July 8, 1875, after his return, he was married to Miss Eliza C. Smith. Two children, a son and daughter, both still living, were born to them. October 20, following, Mr. Robb entered upon the pastorate of the Baptist Church, at



PASTOR B. F. ROBB

Stockton, N. J. Thence he was called to the pastorate at Chestnut Hill, April 15, 1879, though the work was not taken up till the month following. Continuing till February, 1889, he was constrained by failing health to close his ministry. In the hope that a quieter life would prove beneficial, he accepted a position as Pension Examiner, at Corning, N. Y.

He was at one time a member of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Baptist Education Society. He was also prominently identified with the Grand Army, being chaplain of Ellis Post, No. 6, G. A. R. He was a strong Prohibition advocate, and took a lively interest in matters relating to the License Court.

Mr. Robb died at Corning, N. Y., October 5, 1889. His body was brought to Chestnut Hill for burial, and was laid to rest in Ivy Hill Cemetery."

With the exception of the first, Mr. Robb's was the longest pastorate in the history of the church, covering, as it did, very nearly ten years. His work was the quiet, unpretentious, devoted kind, that won, and held the affection of the people. Nor were his friends, by any means, limited to the membership of the church over which he so faithfully presided. To this day, many in the community speak of Pastor Robb in the kindest and most respectful terms.

The daily and constantly recurring duties that claimed his attention were faithfully performed. And this it is that counts in the long run. He showed his interest in the spread

of the Gospel by having the cause of City Missions added to the list of objects for which a schedule had been adopted some years previous, making six regular collections yearly, for as many benevolent objects. A heavy debt, part of which, at least, was upon the parsonage property, was seriously burdening the church. Soon after his entrance upon the pastorate, the payment of this debt was agitated. On the sixth of April, 1886, the pastor laid before the church a proposition from Mr. William Bucknell, offering to pay \$1000 on condition that the church would raise the balance. The offer was accepted, and Mr. Robb went heroically to work. As the result, the church was able to fulfill the condition of Mr. Bucknell's proffer, and thus, happily, free itself from the bondage of debt. The following year the parsonage lot was enlarged by the purchase of fifteen feet on the northeast side.

Twenty-four members, according to the records, were received by baptism during this pastorate. If any one asks whether Pastor Robb was "a good minister of Jesus Christ," we point to the still unabated love of those he served. No better testimonial need be sought.

• Pastors E. D. Hammond and O. B. Strayer. •

For nearly a year following the close of Mr. Robb's work the church was without a settled pastor. Early in 1890 the work was taken up by Mr. Hammond, and relinquished in a few months. He was followed by Mr. Strayer for a brief time, when a vacancy again occurred.



PASTOR C. R. BLACKALL

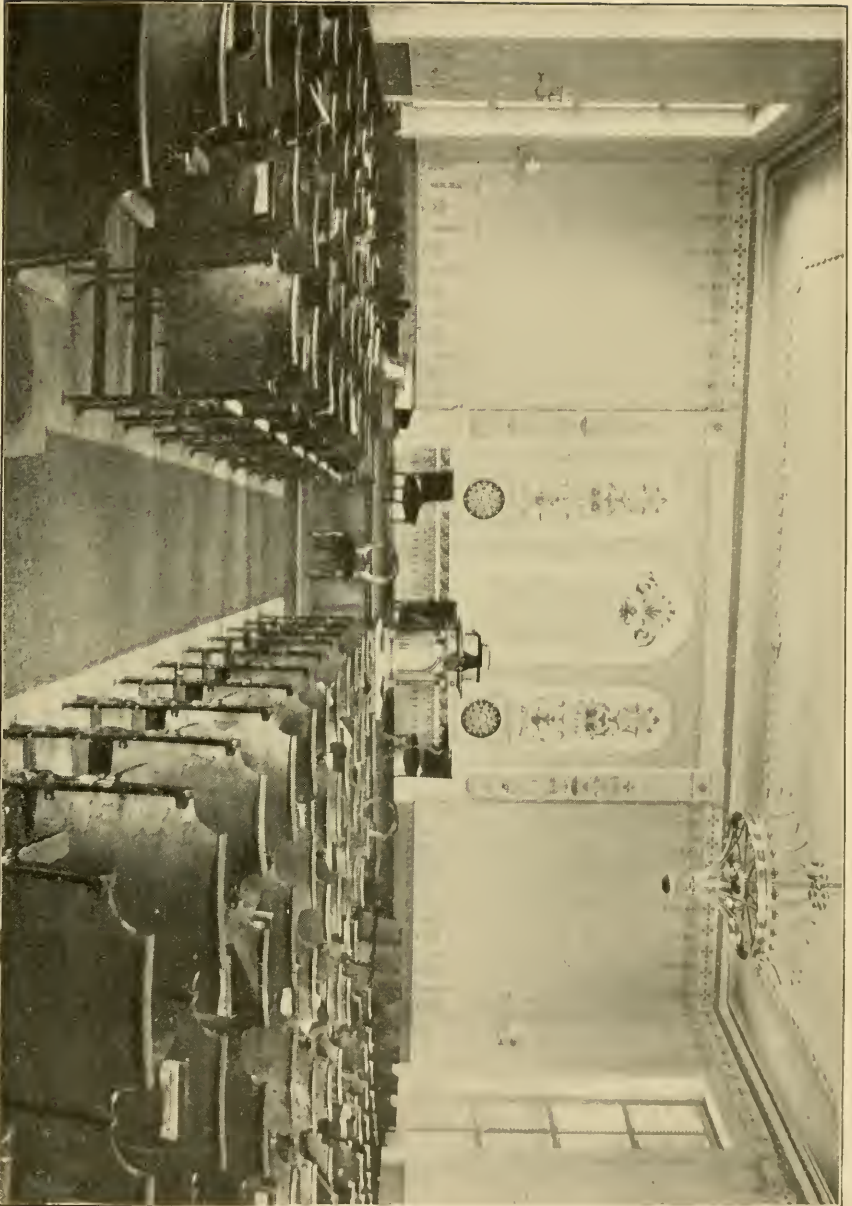
• Pastor C. R. Blackall, D. D. •

On the twenty-first of September, 1891, the Pulpit Committee was instructed, by vote of the church, to procure the services of Dr. Blackall, as stated supply. He had been occupying the pulpit for several Sundays, and the term of his official relation was, therefore, dated back to September 6th. He was, at the time, and is still, connected with the American Baptist Publication Society, as Editor of Periodicals. He presented his resignation just three years later, September, 1894, to take effect immediately, but was prevailed upon to continue till the close of the year, when his successor took up the work. His letter dismissing him from the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia was received May 1, 1892. After the settlement of the present pastor, he continued in active co-operation, serving also, as chairman of the Board of Trustees, till October 9th, when, having removed from the place, he resigned his position as trustee. December 1st, following a letter of dismissal was granted to unite with the Church of the Evangel, at Narberth, Pa.

While Dr. Blackall would not permit himself to be called "pastor," and even by the form of the call was expressly excused from doing pastoral visiting, yet in every particular he was a pastor, not even excepting the visiting. Accordingly, the title "pastor" is employed in the heading.

His work was in all particulars aggressive, and his constant aim toward a symmetrical developement of the church. For various reasons, the church, at his coming, was disheartened, but he inspired them with courage for large undertakings. A floating debt was seriously cumbering the work, and this was paid off. Strict business methods were followed in all the proceedings. As to improvements in the property, both inside and outside bear substantial testimony. The walls of the lecture-room were painted, the ceiling was papered, the floor laid with linoleum, and new heaters were purchased. The auditorium went through a thorough transformation. The walls and ceiling were tastefully frescoed, a new flooring was laid, and the present seating introduced. The improvements in the lower room were made in 1892, those in the upper room in 1893. The work was entered upon with the determination not to go into debt. This purpose was rigidly adhered to. In consequence thereof, when the work was completed, there was no debt, although improvements costing \$2800 had been made.

The completion of the latter was celebrated by a week of special services at the opening of the New Year, 1894. The order of services for the week announces for Sunday, January 7th, Drs. H. L. Wayland and W. H. Conard; for Monday evening, the pastors of the place, Revs. W. W. Harmond, D. D., and W. H. Merrill, (Presbyterian) and Rev. C. H. Rorer, (Methodist Episcopal) as speakers; for Tuesday evening, Rev. Lemuel Moss, D. D.; Wednesday



INTERIOR OF PRESENT HOUSE OF WORSHIP

From Photograph by F. P. Streeper.

(1893.)

evening, the annual business meeting; Thursday, Rev. J. T. Beckley, D. D.; Friday evening, Mr. Charles H. Harrison and Mrs. J. N. Cushing; Sunday morning, Rev. Henry G. Weston, D. D., and for the evening, Dr. Blackall.

Not only in these particulars are we of to-day indebted to the aggressive leadership of Dr. Blackall. The abundant supply of Baptist Hymnals in the upper room, as well as the Select Gems that are in use in the prayer meeting, were procured during this same period. Besides, over two hundred books were added to the Sunday School library, toward which Dr. Blackall made a very generous contribution.

But material improvements were not permitted to engross all the energies of the people. Spiritual development was persistently sought. The various missionary and benevolent enterprises were not forgotten. Interest in the work of Christ beyond the bounds of the local church was shown by offerings made for that purpose.

The church during these years showed a healthy growth, as is evident by twenty-three additions, fifteen of them being by baptism. The writer can testify that the work was passed over into his hands in good condition; and it is no cause for surprise that at the close of Dr. Blackall's pastorate, the church should, by a hearty vote, give expression to their grateful appreciation of his work, as well as to their devout acknowledgement of the supervision of the Great Head of the Church, in giving them such leadership.

By a bequest of Dr. Edward Jacoby, for many years a

member of this body, a generous provision was made for the church, to go into effect upon the death of his widow, Mrs. Jacoby, also a devoted member of this church, who died during the last year of Dr. Blackall's pastorate. According to the terms of the will the church is to receive an annuity of \$200.00, for a term of ten years, (the first payment being made in 1895), and, at the expiration of that time, is to receive the sum of \$6000.00.





PASTOR R. M. HUNSICKER

• The Present Pastorate. •

This has not yet become history, and so, can hardly claim a place in this recital. Yet, as a matter of record, a few items call for mention. The present pastor began his work with the church January 6, 1895, coming from Brookville, Pa., in response to a unanimous call given the ninth of the previous month. Two events of special interest will be noted.

The first of these is important as explaining the preparation of this historical sketch. It was voted by the church to have a reunion of the membership, with a roll call and social, February 22, 1897. Believing that it would be a good thing, especially for the younger portion of the membership, to have a brief review of at least the earlier history of the church, the pastor gave the sermon, of the Sunday morning immediately preceding, a historical turn. But in preparing for this occasion, he was much surprised to discover that the records were exceedingly meagre. Indeed, the book covering the first twenty years could not be found at all. There was, however, in the second book, the first record in which was made October 12, 1854, a list of the baptisms from the first, copied from book number one. Even this was incomplete, owing to the loss of one leaf

with the record of over four years' baptisms. Besides this, as a source of information, Dr. I. Gilbert Young, son of the first pastor, and living in the place, had in his possession a transcript of his father's records, which he kindly put at the service of the writer. Then, too, three of the constituent members were and are still living, and, with remarkable clearness of memory, were able to recall much that was of interest. They are Mrs. Maria Ann Young, widow of the first pastor; Mrs. Maria Harshaw and Mrs. Eleanor Shermer. The pastor, feeling that the history was too valuable, and of too much interest, to be thus lost, and realizing that, if ever it was to be put into permanent form so as to be preserved, it must be done at once, made a proposition to the church that he would undertake the task of writing up the history of these sixty-three years. So much interest had been evoked by the presentation in the sermon, as above referred to, that the church heartily voted approval. It seemed almost a presumptuous undertaking, considering the scantiness of available materials, especially taking into account for the fact that by the disastrous fire of February 2, 1896. files of associational letters in the Publication Society's building, at 1420 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, had been destroyed. In this connection a mention of the valuable services of Rev. Leroy Stephens, D. D., must not be omitted. Possibly nothing more than a manuscript copy might have been prepared, but being present at the evening service on the day of the roll call, Dr. Stephens urged the people to have

the history of their church printed. Then, and there, it was so decided, and substantial pledges were made toward defraying the expenses of the same.

And so the work has been undertaken and pressed toward completion. It might be added here, however, that after some months the lost book, and, also, the missing leaf from book number two, came to light. By this time, the writer, having followed carefully every clue, by correspondence, by consultation of files of associational minutes, and by personal interviews, had pretty thoroughly covered the period of these earlier years. And yet, the book proved of great service in two ways. First, it enabled the writer to verify his work, and second, in some particulars, to amplify it. And, in this place he wishes to make grateful acknowledgment to all who have rendered him such indispensable help, not only those named above, but others, and especially Rev. J. G. Walker, D. D., for so many years, and still, the efficient clerk of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. This will, we believe, sufficiently explain how this work came to be done. And, as to whether it has been worth the doing, and how well it has been done, must be judged by those who may do it the honor of giving it a reading.

The second event, hinted at above, was the sixty-third anniversary of the founding of the church. This was suggested by the interest that had been awakened in connection with the writing of this sketch. It was celebrated Sunday and Monday, September 5th and 6th, 1897. The pastor preached at the

morning service from Ps. 116, 12. Dr. Blackall, being present by special invitation, addressed the boys and girls, and preached at the evening service. On Monday evening, most interesting and stirring addresses were delivered by I. Gilbert Young, M. D., Rev. E. R. Tilton, pastor of the Cold Point Baptist Church, Rev. Edwin MacMinn, pastor First Baptist Church, Salem, N. J., and Rev. George E. Rees, D. D., pastor of the New Tabernacle Baptist Church of West Philadelphia. Also, a poem written for the occasion by Miss Harriet A. Heydrick, was read. These anniversary exercises were an occasion of much inspiration and profit to the church.

The church at the end of three score and three years is in a prosperous condition. In the last Associational letter a membership of one hundred and thirty-four was reported—the highest number reported for seventeen years. During the present pastorate, thirty-four (including the pastor and his wife) have united with the church, eighteen of whom were received by baptism. These sixty-three years abound with evidences of the Divine leading, and watchcare and keeping. Who but that is reminded of the words of Jehovah in Isaiah xxvii. 3, “I, Jehovah, do keep it; I will water in every moment. Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”



DEACON C. GILBERT FISHER

Elected January 9, 1895.

• Retrospect and Prospect. •

What shall this review of three-score and three years yield for us? This is a question that may well concern us. No one in reading the meagre records of these years could be blind to the fact that those whose history has thus been preserved were but human. It requires no special gift of keensightedness to discern mistakes and shortcomings. But it must not be imagined that the record thus left is peculiar in this respect. With changes of names and a few details, it would be an equally faithful portraiture of the doings of many another church of the same times. But shall we leave a better record for the perusal of the generations that shall come after us? What shall be our heritage to others? Of this we are well assured, that those into whose "labors we have entered," *earnestly endeavored to be faithful*. And the only design of this review of the past, has been, to recall such things as should awaken gratitude, and to stimulate to better service. And that one is blind, indeed, who does not find much to stir the heart's gratitude.

To a very large measure is it true of us of to-day, that we have been sent to reap that whereon we have bestowed no labor, and that others, having labored, we have entered into their labors. Shall we, then, make such use of our heritage, so go forward as reapers, that it shall come to pass

that they who have sown, and we who reap, shall, in the great home-gathering, rejoice together? More has been given us than was given to those who have preceded us. Not only have we the heritage that they have committed to us, but our opportunities are greater than theirs. And the Great Teacher admonishes us that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." Shall we measure up to our opportunity and our responsibility?

We stand at a point where the past and the present meet. What, in such situation, is presented to us by way of encouragement? Is there anything more than a heritage of fragrant memories? It is well sometimes to count our blessings. We have a good church property, well located, and entirely free from cumbering debt. We have a commodious house of worship, pleasant, cheery, and in excellent condition. And all this comes to us largely as a gift from those who have entered into rest. We have a membership loyal to the interests of the church, and a scheme of finance that yields gratifying results. We have a Bible School, under the care of a faithful corps of teachers and officers, and an interesting organization of young people. Our missionary organizations are active and in a thriving condition, and our offerings, for the various branches of our Lord's work, show a growing interest in that work for which He, "though rich, became poor." We enjoy the respect of the community, and are favored with good and attentive congregations. We have our Master's

command to "go forward," coupled with the gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days." (R. V., margin.) What, therefore, is there to hinder an obedient going forward in the fulfilment of the gracious purposes of the Gospel? Let him who falters give the answer. To falter, would be treason not only to God and an honored past, but the rising generation, and those yet unborn, would rightly cast upon us the reproach of unfaithfulness.

Thus we have the past, with its memories; the present, with its duties, and the future, with its anticipations— one for wisdom, one for action and one for hope. Let us therefore faithfully serve our own, and thus, future generations, and there will await us glad welcome of those who have gone before, the grateful eulogies of those yet unborn, and the blessed "well done" of an approving God. *Shall this generation "appreciate its own place in history?"*

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together, and herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored and ye are entered into their labors."

"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

APPENDIX

A

As suggestive of the striking contrast between the conditions of life sixty-three years ago and those in the midst of which we to-day are living, and as a hint of the marvelous progress that these passing years have witnessed, the following is quoted from *The American Daily Advertiser*, of Saturday, November 24th, 1832 :

PHILADELPHIA, GERMANTOWN AND NORRISTOWN RAILROAD.

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE.

Notice.—The Locomotive Engine (built by M. W. Baldwin, of this city) will depart DAILY, when the weather is fair, with a TRAIN OF PASSENGER CARS, commencing on Monday, the 16th inst., at the following hours, viz :—

FROM PHILADELPHIA.

At 11 o'clock, A. M.
 “ 1 “ P. M.
 “ 3 “ P. M.

FROM GERMANTOWN.

At 12 o'clock, M.
 “ 2 “ P. M.
 “ 4 “ P. M.

The cars drawn by horses will also depart as usual from Philadelphia at 9 o'clock A. M., and from Germantown at 10 o'clock A. M., and at the above mentioned hours when the weather is not fair.

The points of starting are from the depot, at the corner of Green and Ninth streets, Philadelphia, and from the Main street, near the centre of Germantown. Whole cars may be taken. Tickets 25 cents.

It is said that the president of the road was in the habit of accompanying the train to guard against accidents.

B

As an item of local history of no little interest, the following citation is given from the deed, donating the ground on which Union Chapel was built :

“A certain lot or piece of land situated on Chestnut Hill in Germantown Township, for the use and purpose of building thereon a house for Christian worship, and such other purposes as the said John Magoffin and the said trustees shall consent to, and shall not be detrimental to the other lot of land of which the hereby granted premises are a part, excluding absolutely a common day or night school, and a Sunday school, unless with the proper consent and approbation of the owner of the said other lot of land of which this is a part, and on the decease of the said John Magoffin, or previously thereto, if he may think proper, the said lot hereby granted with such buildings as may be built thereon, shall be under said restrictions—for

The uses of the neighborhood of Chestnut Hill, to be held by trustees possessed of such qualifications and to be appointed in such manner as the said John Magoffin may direct ; and in failure of such direction by him made, and on record in the Recorder's office, it shall be held for such uses, and under said restrictions by trustees to be chosen by the Schwenkfieldian Congress of Towamencin, Montgomery County ; by the Episcopalian, English Presbyterian, German Reformed, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Methodist now existing congregations in Germantown township ; and by the Baptist congregation now existing nearest to said premises, each of which congregations shall appoint one trustee annually, and those actually appointed for a year, commencing always on January 1st, shall be the trustees for that year ; four of whom shall always be a quorum ; and it shall not be lawful for any trustee to refuse the use for worship of the said building, to any minister or teacher of any or either of said denominations ; Provided that no other minister or teacher shall have first had their consent to have made an appointment there.

POSITION OF SAID LOT.

Bounded on S E. by lane leading to John Magoffin's plantation, [Union Ave.] on S by ground of Levi Rex, and N. W. and N. E. by ground of Abram Heydrick. In width, front and rear, 30 feet, and depth 50 feet.

Part of $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres 33 perches land.”

C

These extracts from the records of the church are given not only because of any quaintness they may possess, nor, indeed because of their historic interest in this connection; but because they give, as well, a reflection of affairs in the churches in general in the times in which they were recorded:

Pews rented October 17, 1835.

Israel Gilbert, No. 29; Ezra Sands, 26; Rachel Jacoby, 32; Titus Shermer, C. Strouse, and C. Shuster, 25; Sisters Crosby and S. Campbell, 30; Henry S. Lentz, 51; Paterson and Grant, 31; Louis Bessin, 33; C. Heins and Abner Campbell, 22; 1 dollar and 50 cents paid for a seat by Mrs. Mary Holgate.

September 19, 1835.

On motion resolved, that each member pay 12½ cents per year to defray the expenses of the communion table.

One motion resolved, that the hymns be lined for the singers.

January 7, 1837.

On motion resolved, that any person absenting himself from this church for the space of six months, and living in the bounds of another Baptist church without having taken their letter from this, (except rendering a reasonable excuse) shall be liable to church censure.

October, 1840.

On motion resolved, that the discipline of the primitive churches be adopted.

January, 1842.

On motion resolved, that any person paying annually \$1.00 shall have the privilege of burying their dead in the Baptist grave yard.

July 9, 1842.

On motion resolved, that any member, or members, blazing abroad to the world the business transactions at our church, or special meetings shall be under church censure.

CHESTNUT HILL

January, 1843.

On motion resolved, that a fund be established for the sick poor; collection to be taken at every communion season for said purpose.

July 8, 1843.

On motion resolved, that we take up quarterly collections for State Convention 3rd Sunday in January, Foreign and Missionary and Bible Society, 3rd Sunday in April, Education Society, 3rd Sunday in July, Widows' Fund, 3rd Sunday in September.

October 26, 1843.

On motion resolved, that the deacons be authorized to prevent members from communing who have transgressed and have made no confession.

December 4, 1848.

Church was granted articles of incorporation.

January 1, 1854.

Moved and carried that the penny collections be taken in the gallery.

February, 1855.

On motion it was agreed to that the church and congregation rise to sing the closing hymn of our public exercises.

January 1, 1857.

Resolved that we have religious services on Monday, January 5th, and that it be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer, as recommended by the Association.

May 19, 1858.

Agreeable to notice, the church met to consider the propriety of appointing delegates to meet the delegation to be held in the North Baptist Church to confer with them regarding the formation of a new association of churches.

March 17, 1859.

On motion resolved, that we adopt the system of renting pews, and that every member be required to take a pew, part of a pew, or a sitting.

January 2, 1860.

Resolved that we engage ————— to collect the pastor's salary for 1860 at a commission of 5 per cent or less.

(This was very soon discontinued.)

May 18, 1868.

Trustees voted to exhibit notice prohibiting persons going out during services.

June, 1897.

The concrete pavement at the front, as shown in the picture of the present house of worship, was constructed, the brick sidewalk laid, and the front fence changed to its present form, at this time.

D

In the table given below, the yearly increase by baptism, only, is given, simply because increase by letter, and otherwise, as well as losses in the various ways, could not, except in a rather small portion of cases, be made out. But the increase, yearly, as given, can be relied upon as being very approximately correct. This is given yearly in the statistical reports in the Associational minutes. These have, besides, been compared with other records with such care that deviation from strict accuracy, if there be such, is so slight as scarcely, if at all, to affect the aggregate. For the yearly membership as given not so much can be claimed in the way of accuracy. These figures are taken with but few exceptions from the statistical reports above mentioned. In one case at least there is manifestly a considerable error, viz., 1845. The additions, other than by baptism, carefully recorded in the church book which amount to thirteen, are not sufficient to raise the number from that reported the year previous; but not regarding it wise to seek to correct these totals, unless there was some assurance of reaching the correct result, it has been thought best to give it as

recorded, being, most likely, a typographical error. Such there are, without doubt, in other cases. And yet, these data may be depended upon for being very largely correct. In other cases a startling falling off will be observed. This is easily explained. In 1854, fifty-three received letters of dismissal to form the Cold Point Church. In other cases there has been a large reduction by reason of erasures and exclusions—one year alone forty-nine. Total number of baptisms in sixty-three years, seven hundred and one.

| Year. | Baptisms. | Membership. | Year. | Baptisms. | Membership. |
|-------|-----------|-------------|-------|-----------|-------------|
| 1834 | 18 | 19 | 1866 | 26 | 196 |
| 1835 | 13 | 35 | 1867 | 26 | 220 |
| 1836 | 6 | 46 | 1868 | 5 | 206 |
| 1837 | 20 | 65 | 1869 | 3 | 178 |
| 1838 | 19 | 82 | 1870 | 9 | 195 |
| 1839 | 14 | 94 | 1871 | 5 | 184 |
| 1840 | 11 | 102 | 1872 | 1 | 179 |
| 1841 | 13 | 108 | 1873 | 9 | 188 |
| 1842 | 43 | 150 | 1874 | 16 | 204 |
| 1843 | 53 | 199 | 1875 | 9 | 210 |
| 1844 | 11 | 205 | 1876 | 10 | 170 |
| 1845 | 21 | 281 | 1877 | 3 | 160 |
| 1846 | 19 | 241 | 1878 | 3 | 157 |
| 1847 | 9 | 234 | 1879 | 0 | 146 |
| 1848 | 21 | 249 | 1880 | 0 | 139 |
| 1849 | 13 | 234 | 1881 | 1 | 119 |
| 1850 | 1 | 220 | 1882 | 10 | 128 |
| 1851 | 19 | 220 | 1883 | 1 | 127 |
| 1852 | 19 | 223 | 1884 | 0 | 127 |
| 1853 | 8 | 211 | 1885 | 5 | 129 |
| 1854 | 56 | 205 | 1886 | 5 | 131 |
| 1855 | 4 | 205 | 1887 | 1 | 127 |
| 1856 | 36 | 225 | 1888 | 1 | 123 |
| 1857 | 13 | 234 | 1889 | 0 | 121 |
| 1858 | 10 | 240 | 1890 | 3 | 126 |
| 1859 | 1 | 209 | 1891 | 3 | 132 |
| 1860 | 2 | 185 | 1892 | 9 | 124 |
| 1861 | 6 | 182 | 1893 | 1 | 106 |
| 1862 | 24 | 202 | 1894 | 1 | 104 |
| 1863 | 2 | 190 | 1895 | 10 | 117 |
| 1864 | 7 | 191 | 1896 | 1 | 117 |
| 1865 | 2 | 184 | 1897 | 10 | 134 |

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